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How the **Dudleys** shaped a dynasty (and paid the price)

HISTORY MAGAZINE

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Nebra Sky Disc, Germany, about 1600 BC. Photo courtesy of the State Office for Heritage Management and Archaeology Saxony-Anhalt, Juraj Lipták.

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WELCOME

MAY 2022

BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE

"History is all about perspectives. Each event from the past meant different things to different people, but not all of those versions are reflected in the histories we tell. This is especially the case with the **Persian empire**, which tends to be remembered through the words of the Greeks who battled them – and, not surprisingly, in a distinctly negative light. But there are alternative ways to view the first great empire of the ancient world, and in this month's cover feature Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones highlights the Persian perspective in his narrative of their rise and fall. Turn to page 20 for that.

As we go to press, the news continues to be dominated by **the war in Ukraine**, and on page 41 we've gathered a panel of historians to comment on the historical background to the conflict. Our experts also consider how **history itself has been brought into battle**, often with depressingly little regard for accuracy. Meanwhile, both Anna Whitelock (page 8) and Michael Wood (page 10) focus their columns on the tragedy that's unfolding.

Finally, I'd like to highlight a new regular contributor to the magazine. From this month, the BBC broadcaster and author **Kavita Puri** is taking over from Emma Dabiri as the author of our *Hidden Histories* column (page 17). She begins with a powerful story of intergenerational tensions, as a family of south Asian origin adjusted to life in Britain.

I hope you enjoy the issue.

Rob Attar
Editor

THREE THINGS I'VE LEARNED THIS MONTH

1. Insects on the menu

Dominic Lieven's new history of emperors across the globe reveals that the seventh-century Chinese ruler Taizong once ate a plate of locusts when the insects were plaguing his people (page 79).

2. A beloved blood sport

There's plenty of fascinating material in our feature on birds through history. One thing that stood out to me was the fact that cockfighting "was for centuries Britain's most popular sport" (page 38).

3. Secrets burned

Lord Byron's life was famously scandalous, but I'd not been aware that after the poet's death his friends had set fire to his memoirs, rather than allow the secrets they contained to see the light of day (page 14).

THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS

Kris Manjapra
"Families were torn apart by slavery. But families were also torn apart by emancipation, and the state created a kind of protection for slave owners that continued for decades."
Kris examines the difficult legacy of emancipation from slavery on page 74

Joanne Paul
"We might know all about Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, but it's the story of the Tudor-era Dudley family – with all its scandal, love, bloodshed and ambition – that I want to tell."
Joanne charts the dizzying rise and deadly fall of the Dudleys on page 30

Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones
"For too long, Persia has been the forgotten civilisation of the ancient world. Now it's time to restore it to its rightful place in history, and show how the Persians were the world's first superpower."
Lloyd examines the sprawling empire from the Persians' perspective on page 20

Hannah Skoda
"During my research into the experiences of slaves in late medieval southern Europe, I've discovered that an enormous amount of legal material survives, which amazingly foregrounds the voices of the slaves themselves."
Hannah profiles those who endured (and escaped) slavery in medieval Europe on page 52

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ON THE COVER: FRIEZE DEPICTING A PAIR OF WINGED LIONS WITH HUMAN HEADS FACING EACH OTHER, FROM THE PALACE OF DARIUS I AT SUSA, IRAN, ACHAEMENID PERIOD, 5TH CENTURY BC: GETTY IMAGES. ROBERT DUDLEY: GETTY IMAGES. THIS PAGE: DREAMSTIME/GETTY IMAGES/KATE BENZIE/BEOWULF SHEEHAN/JENI NOTT

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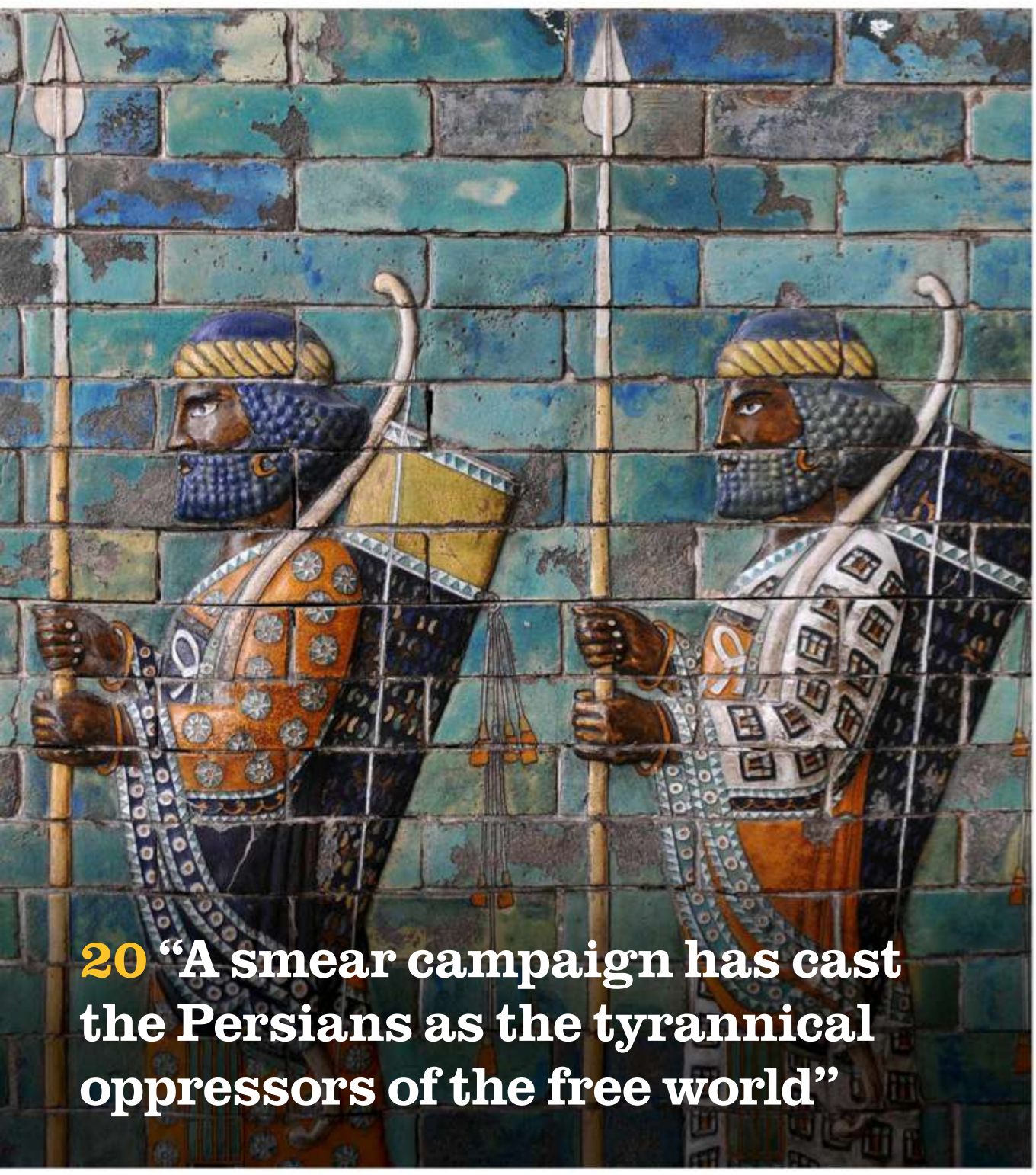

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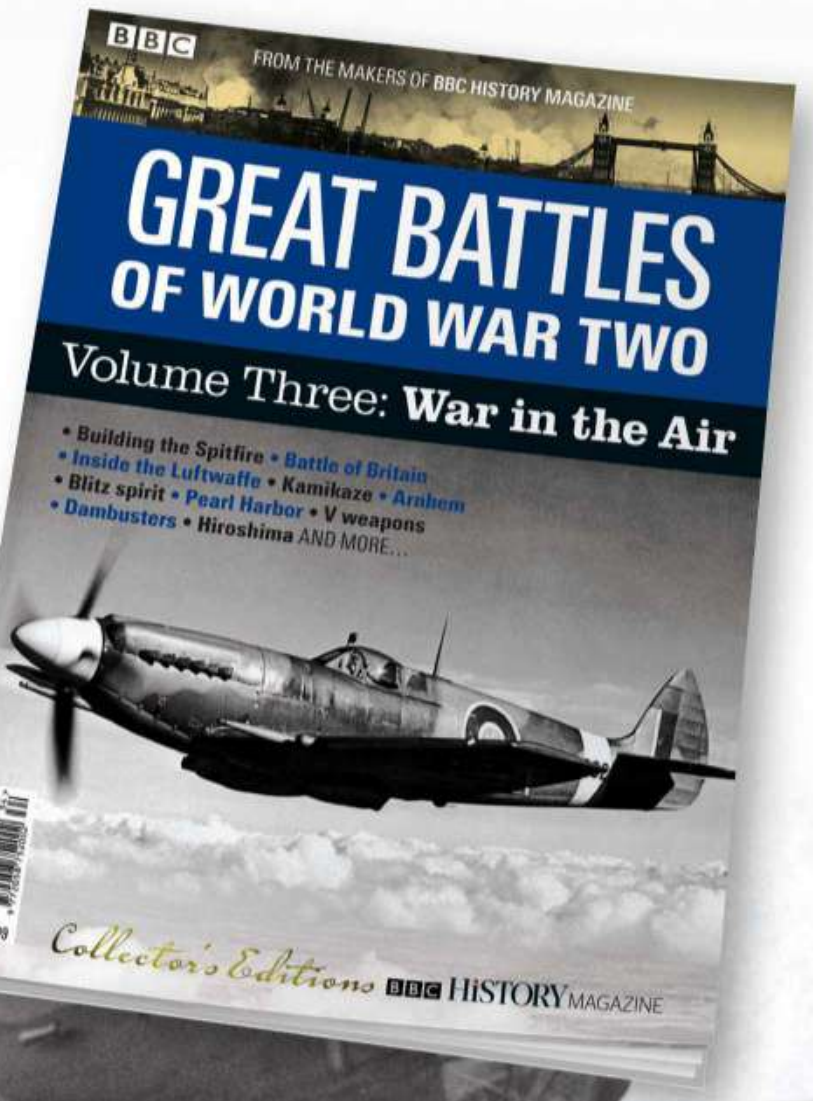
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Men of No 83 Squadron are all smiles as they pass a Handley Page Hampden bomber at RAF Scampton, Lincolnshire, October 1940

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THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

EYE-OPENER

Frozen in time

A little over a century after it vanished beneath the ice, experts have uncovered the wreck of the *Endurance* – explorer Ernest Shackleton's ship that famously sank in the Weddell Sea off the coast of Antarctica in 1915.

The discovery of one of the most famous lost vessels in maritime history is all the more extraordinary because the *Endurance* appears to be so well preserved. Experts from the search expedition, spearheaded by the Falklands Maritime Heritage Trust, revealed images – including that of the ship's wheel and aft well deck (below) – that show its sections still intact, with artefacts including anchors, boots and crockery evident throughout.

Shackleton set out to the Antarctic in 1914, hoping to make the first land crossing of the continent. The harsh conditions quickly took their toll, though: within a year, pack ice stymied the voyage and, when pressure on the hull became irresistible, the ship finally sank in November 1915.

After an epic escape mission, the crew were all rescued nine months later; the *Endurance*, though, was not recovered. Thanks to an international treaty, the ship will remain undisturbed exactly as it was found.

The wreck of the *Endurance*, preserved in the Weddell Sea, and (top) an image taken in 1915 by the ship's photographer, Frank Hurley

FALKLANDS MARITIME HERITAGE TRUST/GETTY IMAGES

Have a story? Please email Matt Elton at matt.elton@immediate.co.uk

TALKING POINTS

Warnings from history?

To what extent do the roots of the conflict in Ukraine lie in the Cold War? That was a question exercising Twitter commentators, as **ANNA WHITELOCK** reports

In March, as Russian forces continued their assault on Ukraine, President Volodymyr Zelensky made a speech to German MPs. His impassioned address drew extensively on Cold War imagery, including his fears of a new wall being built in central Europe "between freedom and bondage" – making explicit parallels with the Berlin Wall, which divided that city between 1961 and 1989.

Zelensky's words added to an ongoing discussion among historians and other social media users about the ways in which the current conflict can be viewed through the prism of Cold War politics, legacies and memories. **MacroScope** (@MacroScope17) tweeted that "we avoided disaster during the Cold War largely because leaders on both sides had first-hand memories of the Second World War. Now we have 'hawks' [politicians and commentators in favour of war] who never served, and a nation whose idea of war is flying a drone thousands of miles away. Beware."

James (@TweetFiction) agreed. "None of us lived through the Second World War, and [until recently] the Cold War was a fading memory. We got little glimpses of what happens when civilisation teeters on the brink in places like Syria, but it's never been this big. Civilisation lives on the edge of a knife."

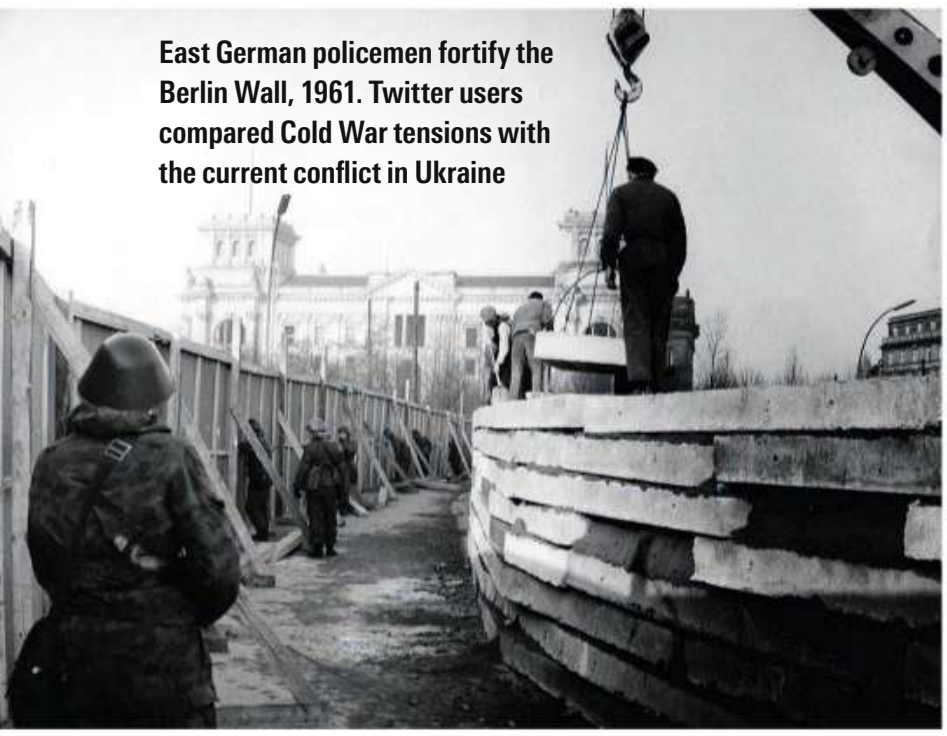
Writing in *The Washington Post*, **Max Bergmann** (@maxbergmann) pointed out that US president Joe Biden was a senator during the Cold War, and is therefore attuned to the dangers of escalation. Others were not so sure. US representative **Ilhan Omar** (@IlhanMN) condemned calls for military escalation, arguing that, whereas Cold War leaders understood that nuclear war would inevitably mean the annihilation of humanity, "[some] voices now are shockingly casual about the risk of nuclear war".

Join the debate at **twitter.com/historyextra**

Andrew A Michta (@andrewmichta) offered a different perspective. "Ukraine is reminding the west that, when one's country is attacked, the primary objective should not be to find yet again a compromise to stop the fighting. The goal must be to beat back the aggressor and win. These are core principles that post-Cold War Europe needs to relearn."

Meanwhile, **Martin Jacques** (@martjacques) posed a question: "After Ukraine, a new global order? No, simply a new European order marked by a return to Cold War-style divisions. Europe now counts for far less than in 1991. A new global order is, above all, about China and the US. The world's epicentre is no longer Europe but East Asia."

As the war goes on in Ukraine – and with it the waves of rhetoric and disinformation – these debates will surely continue. H

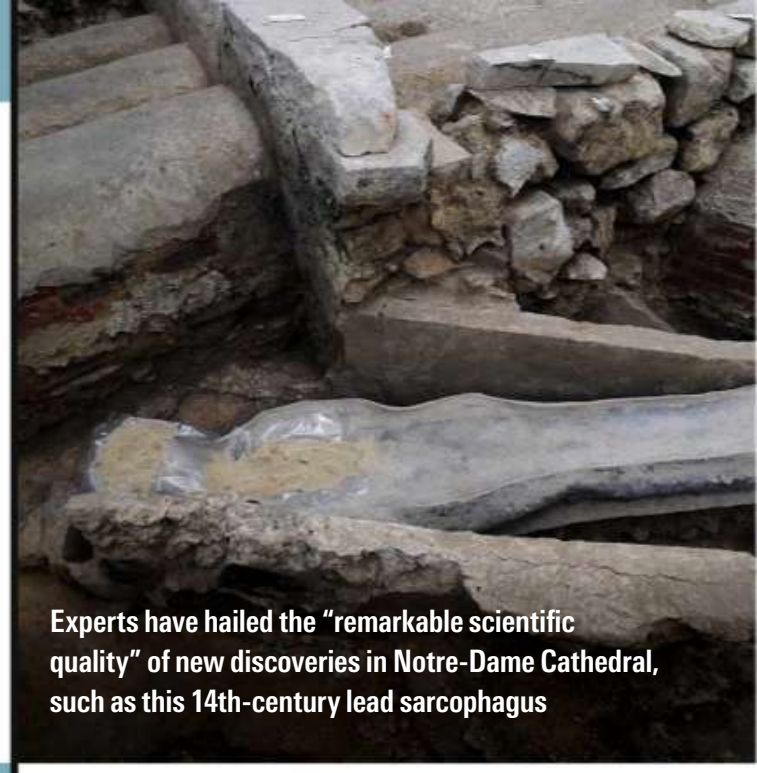


East German policemen fortify the Berlin Wall, 1961. Twitter users compared Cold War tensions with the current conflict in Ukraine

Anna Whitelock is professor of history at City, University of London

» For more on the historical background to the conflict in Ukraine, turn to page 41

> "After Ukraine, a new global order? No, simply a return to Cold War-style divisions"



Experts have hailed the "remarkable scientific quality" of new discoveries in Notre-Dame Cathedral, such as this 14th-century lead sarcophagus

GETTY IMAGES

FRANCE

Medieval tombs found beneath Notre-Dame

Almost three years on from the devastating fire that destroyed the spire and much of the roof of Notre-Dame de Paris, reconstruction work at the cathedral – which was first built in the 12th century – has revealed a host of new historical discoveries.

Experts uncovered several tombs beneath an 18th-century floor, the stability of which had to be checked before work could continue. All are thought to date from the 14th century, and it's thought that perhaps the most remarkable find – a human-shaped lead sarcophagus – was made for a senior religious dignitary.

Initial investigations – using a small camera inserted into the sarcophagus to avoid disrupting its contents – revealed pieces of fabric and a kind of pillow made from leaves, similar to objects found in the burials of other church leaders. The fact that both appear to be in good condition suggests that the body may also be well preserved.

The team of archaeologists also uncovered the remains of a series of painted sculptures, variously depicting hands, vegetables and the bust of a bearded man. It's thought that these may have been sections of the cathedral's original 13th-century rood screen, which once separated the altar from the nave.

Archaeology work at Notre-Dame was completed at the end of March, when the reconstruction project restarted. The cathedral is scheduled to reopen in time for the 2024 Summer Olympics, to be hosted in Paris. H

» For more on the reconstruction of Notre-Dame, turn to page 89

HISTORY IN THE NEWS

A selection of the stories hitting the **history headlines**

Search of sunken ship yields haul of slavery artefacts ▼

New analysis of a shipwreck near Drake's Island in Plymouth Sound suggests that the vessel may have been among the earliest used in the international slave trade. Experts from the Ships Project, which examines key sites in Britain's maritime history, discovered objects including manillas – copper tokens traded in exchange for enslaved people from west Africa – on board the wreck, which they believe may date from as far back as 1580. It's hoped that further finds will reveal more about the vessel, including its name and dates of operation.

One of the tokens – known as manillas – found on board the wreck. Such artefacts were used as currency in the slave trade with west Africa

A section of prehistoric jawbone, complete with teeth, uncovered beneath the site of new flats in Oxford

▲ Experts find prehistoric burial mound beneath college annexe

Archaeologists in Oxford believe they may have uncovered evidence of a prehistoric burial mound at a site where new student flats are being built.

The finds, made at an annexe of Brasenose College, University of Oxford, include part of a human jawbone with some of its teeth still in place, as well as a skull fragment and other remains typical of a Bronze Age barrow (burial mound). They are thought to date from around 4,000 years ago, long before the city existed; Oxford Archaeology experts suggest that they comprise the first evidence of a prehistoric burial ground at the location.

It is, however, not the only historical discovery to be made in recent months at the site, on New Inn Hall Street. In February, an Oxford Archaeology team also found evidence of a former university college. Founded in 1435 for members of the Augustinian order, St Mary's College fell into disrepair within a century and was abandoned entirely during the dissolution of the monasteries initiated by Henry VIII between 1536 and 1540.

▶ International police seize thousands of historical artefacts

From gold coins crafted in the Roman empire and shards of pottery to more sizeable objects – including paintings, statues and musical instruments – almost 10,000 artefacts have been recovered by international police following a four-month-long operation.

Operation Pandora VI, led by Spanish forces, is part of an ongoing initiative launched in 2016 to dismantle the global networks through which antiques and art are trafficked. This latest phase saw checks put in place between June and September 2021 at airports and national borders, as well as at museums and physical and online auction houses.

The results were impressive. In France, authorities seized three statuettes originating from a pre-Columbian culture in what's now Colombia and Ecuador, and Spanish police uncovered a trove of 91 Roman-era coins believed to have a value of more than £400,000 if traded illegally. As well as making arrests, law authorities are also working with historical experts to match the recovered artefacts against a list of stolen and missing items.

Officials in Italy, with some of the illegally traded artefacts seized as part of the operation. Many of the investigations are still ongoing

Suffrage campaigner statue unveiled in Cheshire ▼

A sculpture of 19th-century suffrage campaigner Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy has been installed in Congleton, the Cheshire town in which she lived for more than 50 years. Born in 1833, Elmy spent decades working for women's rights and, alongside her friend Emmeline Pankhurst, was active in the early years of the Women's Social and Political Union, the movement founded in 1903 to campaign for the right for women to vote.

Funded as a result of a four-year project by local women, the statue (pictured right) was created by artist Hazel Reeves, who also sculpted an effigy of Pankhurst that was unveiled in St Peter's Square in Manchester in 2018. H

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY/SHIPS PROJECT/WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE INTERPOL GENERAL SECRETARIAT

MICHAEL WOOD ON...
THE DIVERSE HERITAGE OF UKRAINE'S BLACK SEA COAST

"English settlers planted colonies in Crimea and on the Sea of Azov"

Michael Wood is professor of public history at the University of Manchester. He has presented numerous BBC series, and his latest book is *The Story of China* (Simon & Schuster, 2021). His Twitter handle is @mayavision

BBC

"War has returned to Europe", said the BBC News. Watching TV pictures from Ukraine, many thoughts crowd the mind. I'm sure that most of us, especially those of my generation and older, never dreamed that the possibility of war in Europe would ever arise again.

One of the grim byproducts of the wars of our times has been the destruction of minorities, as we have seen recently in Iraq and Syria – destroying not only lives but also centuries of history in which minorities lived side by side and intermixed, creating often magical cultural fusions.

In recent years I've made a couple of journeys to the Black Sea – the region the Greeks call the Pontus. Settled by the Greeks from the 8th century BC, few places more deserve that clichéd description "melting pot". Round its shores lives an incredible mix of populations left by waves of history: Greeks, Russians, Tatars, Jews, Armenians and Ukrainians.

In Turkey, in the forested mountains behind Trabzon (formerly Trebizond), you'll still hear Pontic Greek spoken, and even see old Pontic dances such as the *horon*, accompanied by the three-stringed *lyra*. Constanța, on the Romanian coast, also hosts a Greek community and, in the old town square in front of the museum, a huge collection of Greek inscriptions. Over the Danube in Ukraine, the port of Odessa – known for its Mediterranean civic buildings and boulevards – is home to several major population groups. Also in Ukraine, in Mariupol on the Sea of Azov (at least until Putin's brutal invasion in February), were 20,000 people who still speak the Rumeika dialect of Pontic Greek. But one Black Sea settlement adventure remains almost unknown – even though it may have lasted 300 years and, amazingly, involved the English.

Following the catastrophic Norman conquest of 1066, many English people migrated to Constantinople. Then, sponsored by the Byzantine emperor, they built new lives in a string of colonies in Crimea and round the Sea of Azov. It's a fascinating tale.

After the grim period of the late 1060s and early 1070s, when the Normans mercilessly harried the English population, many survivors saw no future staying in England once the Conqueror's grip was assured. Norman historians tell how important figures sold their land and organised migrations of English people to other countries – to Denmark, to Scotland and, most remarkably of all, to the Byzantine empire. There, large numbers of Englishmen took service with the emperor, especially in his imperial Varangian guard.

But it didn't end there. The 14th-century Icelandic *Saga of Edward the Confessor* and the anonymous *Chronicle of Laon* of c1220 both tell an almost unbelievable tale that leads us on to Crimea. The chronicle describes one major migrant expedition in 1075, in which 235 ships (350, according to the saga) sailed to Constantinople with families as well as soldiers. Having helped the emperor repel a siege, English leaders asked to be rewarded with lands to settle. They then sailed north from Constantinople "into the Sea" and took lands that they called "New England".

"These lands lie six days and nights sailing north-east from Constantinople," says the *Chronicle of Laon*, "and the best of land is there, and those people have lived there ever since."

The English settlers planted their colonies on the Black Sea, in Crimea and on the Sea of Azov (which became known as the "Varang Sea"), where they built towns named after those in England – including Londina and York. In this "land of the Saxons", English was spoken as late as the 14th century. "Loyalty to the emperor," wrote the Byzantine princess Anna Comnena in the 12th century, "was a family tradition among them and a sacred trust handed down from generation to generation." At Christmas, they toasted the emperor in their native tongue!

Migrants from England continued to replenish the stock of people in these colonies, which probably survived until the Black Death – perhaps longer. "New England" and "Londina" appeared on charts drawn by Italian and Greek sailors as late as the 16th century.

So may we perhaps imagine that some of today's heroic resistance to the Russians around Mariupol involves distant descendants of the Azov English? And when the war is over and Ukraine is being rebuilt, spare a thought for this particular corner of a foreign field that was – for a time, at least – New England. H

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ANNIVERSARIES

HELEN CARR highlights events that took place in May in history

22 MAY 1455

The Wars of the Roses begin

Yorkist forces triumph at the first battle of St Albans

The Wars of the Roses began not with a battlefield clash but in bloody urban warfare fought on foot through the streets of St Albans, a modest market town some 20 miles north-west of London.

Unrest had been building in England since Henry VI inherited the throne in 1422, aged about nine months. During his long minority, the country was ruled by a council of nobles between which bitter rivalries arose. Henry's powerful queen, Margaret of Anjou, was also unpopular – not least with Richard, Duke of York. Like Henry, York was a descendant of Edward III with a strong claim to the throne.

In May 1455, York and his ally Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, mustered a private army in northern England and marched south towards London. Henry's supporters (now known as Lancastrians) moved north to St Albans, where troops were already stationed.

After brief negotiations on 22 May, Yorkist troops attacked, and brutal fighting spilled onto the streets, narrow lanes and even gardens of St Albans. Henry's men were soon wilting; arrows rained down on the Lancastrian forces, injuring their leader, Lord Buckingham, as well as the king, who was captured and taken to London in Yorkist custody. Six months later, Richard was made lord protector of England – and so began a power struggle between their houses that continued for the next three decades.

The Lancastrian Baron Clifford is mourned at St Albans in an illustration for Shakespeare's *Henry VI Part 2*

MARY EVANS/ALAMY

British troops at the relief of Lucknow, one of the key episodes of the 1857 Indian uprising. This far-reaching revolt was sparked by rebellious sepoys in Meerut

Mary, Queen of Scots, shown in a painting from c1578–79

15 MAY 1567

Mary, Queen of Scots marries her third husband, Lord Bothwell, at Holyrood Palace in Edinburgh. It is likely that the wedding was forced by Bothwell who, it was rumoured, murdered Mary's previous husband, Lord Darnley.

10 MAY 1857

Indian sepoys revolt against British rule

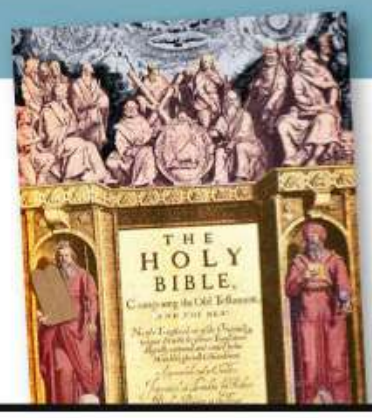
The uprising triggers a bloody war of independence

The East India Company (EIC) dominated India throughout the 18th century, the British company raking in huge profits from trade and moulding politics across the subcontinent. But its stranglehold began to be loosened on 10 May 1857, when sepoys (Indian soldiers serving in EIC forces) revolted at Meerut, a large EIC military base. The rebellion had a domino effect, triggering uprisings across India and launching a war of independence.

Long-simmering discontent with British rule was the ultimate cause of the revolt, but the spark for the initial uprising was unexpected: cartridge grease. Rumours had spread that the new Enfield gun cartridges were greased in pig and cow fat. Cows are sacred to Hindus, and pork is prohibited to Muslims; as a result, 85 Indian troopers of the 3rd Bengal Light Cavalry refused to use the cartridges during a military drill. On 9 May, British officers – indifferent to these religious views – had those men stripped, shackled and paraded through the streets as a warning against disobedience, before imprisoning them.

Rather than subduing the rest of the Indian soldiers, it had the opposite effect. Demonstrations were held in Meerut and, on 10 May, a full-scale revolt erupted. As it was a Sunday, many British officers were not on duty; some were attending church, while others were attacked in the streets by sepoys and civilians. As well as British soldiers, women and children were also killed, though most escaped or were helped to safety by loyal Indian troops – before those sepoys joined the rebellion themselves.

The uprising spilled overnight from Meerut to Delhi, 40 miles south-west, and then across north-central India. Though the revolt enjoyed initial success,the British regained control with a "take no prisoners" policy, and thousands of Indian soldiers and civilians were murdered in revenge.



A colourised version of the title page of the 1611 King James Bible

2 MAY 1611

The **King James Bible,** an English-language translation sponsored by King James VI & I, is published. It becomes one of the most influential books of all time, used to spread the Christian faith across the globe.

ILLUSTRATION BY **KATE BENZIE**

17 MAY 1824

Lord Byron's diaries are burned

The salacious secrets penned in its pages are lost forever

On 19 April 1824, the poet and libertine Lord Byron died in Greece at the tender age of 36, having succumbed to a raging fever. Less than a month later, his grieving friends committed one of the greatest crimes in literary history. Gathering at the home of his publisher, John Murray, in Albemarle Street, London, they tore apart his memoirs and set them on fire.

How did such a wanton act of destruction come about? Between 1818 and 1821, Byron had compiled his memoirs, giving them to friend and fellow poet Thomas Moore to read. Moore sold them to Murray for 2,000 guineas, with the intention that they be published after Byron's death – a plan that, in life, the poet was eager to carry out.

After his demise, though, Byron's friend John Cam Hobhouse warned that the material within the manuscript was too sexually explicit to be revealed to the world. And on 17 May, Hobhouse and Moore met with Murray at the latter's home to discuss the memoirs' fate.

During the gathering at Albemarle Street, attended also by the lawyers of both Byron's widow and his half-sister, Augusta Leigh, the men agonised over the fate of Byron's unpublished – and possibly most notorious – manuscript. Certainly, they feared that the lewd passages would destroy the poet's posthumous reputation. It is likely, too, that the memoirs also contained defamatory material about not only Byron himself but also his friends present in that room.

At one point it was suggested that the manuscript should be hidden away, safe from prying eyes. However, it was deemed that the only way to truly secure such scandalous information was to erase it entirely. The pages containing Byron's memories and incendiary opinions would have to be torn up and tossed in the fire.

Ever since, conjecture and rumours have swirled around Byron's lost memoirs and the revelations they may have contained about the poet's mysterious private life. Some scholars live in hope that a copy of the manuscript still exists somewhere; if so, it is yet to be discovered. Byron's secrets, it seems, have gone with him to the grave.

GETTY IMAGES

Charles II enters London in this hand-coloured print. His return signalled the end of the Commonwealth

BRIDGEMAN/ GETTY IMAGES

29 MAY 1660

Charles II comes for his crown

The Merry Monarch's arrival marks the end of the republic

Charles II is remembered for his lavish parties and debauchery, but the celebration he surely enjoyed most was his 30th birthday. That was the day on which he entered London to claim his crown.

His arrival was marked with pomp and splendour. His procession through the capital lasted seven hours, greeted by crowds so large and dense that his men were forced to brandish their swords to make way for the new king.

It's not surprising that the people were excited by his return. Since Charles I's execution in 1649, the country had mostly been a republican Commonwealth led by Oliver Cromwell. That leader's brand of staunch Protestantism had stamped out the indulgence and excess that had formerly been associated with the ruling classes. The return of the king promised the return of frivolity and fun.

The day also highlighted sobering parallels between the triumphant Charles II and his father. On his journey to the scaffold more than a decade earlier, Charles I had passed beneath the grand Rubens ceiling at Banqueting House – ironically, an allegorical testament to the glory of monarchy. In 1660, his namesake son passed beneath that same ceiling en route to ascend the throne and restore Britain's monarchy.

His reign became known as a golden age, but one of his first acts as king was to seek revenge on the regicides – those responsible for his father's death. The body of Cromwell was exhumed and decapitated, and every surviving man who signed Charles I's death warrant was executed, imprisoned or exiled. H

Helen Carr is a historian and writer. She is the author of *The Red Prince* (Oneworld, 2021)

WHY WE SHOULD REMEMBER...

150 YEARS AGO

The **Amnesty Act**, which shaped the post-Civil War US's reconstruction

BY **ALYS BEVERTON**

What was the General Amnesty Act?
It was a law passed by the US Congress in May 1872 to remove certain political prohibitions – including a ban on holding elected office – that had been imposed on defeated Southern rebels following the North's victory in the American Civil War (1861–65).

Why was it passed?
Immediately after the Civil War, a raft of congressional legislation was enacted, including the ban on ex-rebels holding office. Known as Reconstruction, these laws also granted civil and political rights to the 4 million African-Americans who had been freed from slavery. This was met with fierce resistance by many white Southerners, some of whom joined organisations such as the Ku Klux Klan to terrorise freed people who dared exercise their newly recognised rights.

To protect African-Americans, the federal government required troops, resources, and the support of Northern voters – something which, by the early 1870s, was in short supply. The Amnesty Act reflected a growing consensus among white Northerners that, in order to end racial turmoil in the South, former rebels must be forgiven rather than punished.

What was the immediate reaction to the act?
There was opposition from radical members of the Republican Party. However, the act received widespread support from Democrats and moderate Republicans, who welcomed the return into the national fold of the roughly 150,000 ex-rebels who had previously been excluded from government.

How did it shape Reconstruction?
Over the next five years, former rebels were elected to state and federal offices across the South. Meanwhile, Washington DC increasingly declined to act to defend the liberties of black Southerners. In 1877, President Rutherford Hayes withdrew US troops from the South, formally ending federal protection for African Americans in the region.

Southern legislators then moved to reverse the achievements of Reconstruction by, among other things, enacting literacy tests to deny the vote to African-Americans, and passing laws mandating the separation of black and white people in public spaces.

Why should we remember the Amnesty Act today?
The long-term consequences of the act are still evident in US society to this day. The system of segregation created after Reconstruction remained in place until the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, but even that extraordinary effort failed to fully uproot racial inequality. Discrimination in housing, employment and policing remain realities of American life today. We cannot understand why without first knowing the history of Reconstruction, and the Amnesty Act's pivotal role within it. H

A group of formerly enslaved African-Americans around the time of the US Civil War. The Amnesty Act removed prohibitions on political roles for many Southern rebels after the war

Alys Beverton is a lecturer in American history at Oxford Brookes University

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HIDDEN HISTORIES

KAVITA PURI explores lesser-known stories from our past

"The sense of belonging, and of loss, is rarely covered in history books"

Histories are all around us – but often they are hidden, either because we're not looking in the right places or asking the right questions. They are not only big moments, but small ones too.

I want to tell you about a mother and daughter, Runi and Farah. I've been interviewing them across the course of nearly a decade for a series I make for BBC Radio 4 called *Three Pounds in My Pocket*, which charts – through personal testimonies – the social history of British south Asians in the postwar years, and of their descendants.

Runi came to Britain in 1968 from Dhaka, then in East Pakistan but now in Bangladesh, as a young bride to be with her husband. As well as coming to a new country, she was also meeting her husband for the first time. They had been married on the phone while she was in Dhaka, he in London, and had only exchanged love letters. Just over a year later, Farah was born. It was the happiest moment of Runi's life.

But 21 years later, independent Farah took a decision that brought her freedom, but gave her mother "the most intense pain of her life". Farah called from Liverpool, where she was at university, to tell her mother that she wasn't coming back to the family home in London. She wanted to stay on. Farah didn't want to be pressured into an arranged marriage, or conform to how a Bengali woman should be.

On the face of it, this doesn't feel so heartbreaking. But it touched something deep in Runi. After the call, she rushed out of the house in tears. An English friend drove her all the way to Kent so that she could clear her head by the sea. But the water was no balm: instead, it reminded her of the Buriganga river near where she had grown up, and in which she would fish and play. And she felt a profound loss, for her daughter and for the country of her birth. It was the realisation that her expectations and hopes were so different from Farah's. And for the "pioneer generation", it was a further pulling away from one place and a deeper anchoring in another.

There are always generational differences, of course. But for those in the first generation, who were born elsewhere and brought up their children in a different country, they are more pronounced in so many ways. The two generations have a different attachment to the place in which they now live. This sense of belonging, and of loss, is rarely covered directly in history books – just as the struggles against racism and for equality are far better documented than the quieter struggles between generations.

By 2006 Farah had two boys, and decided that the family should move back to London. She wanted them to be near their grandparents, as she had never known hers and was all too aware of how precious that relationship was. She also wanted them to learn about Bengali culture and language from Runi. Their story had come full circle.

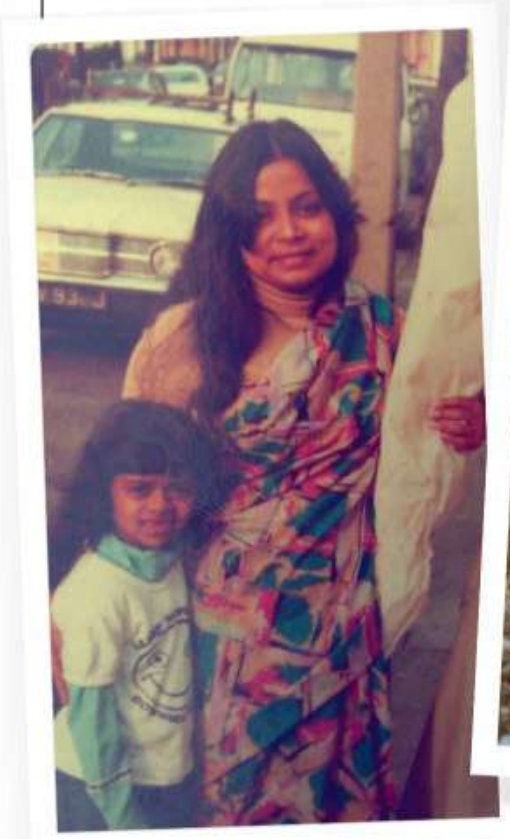
When I talk to my interviewees, I always ask them about big historical moments and how they shaped their lives. But it is delicate conversations like this one, about ordinary lives in ordinary times, that reveal so much about the process of migration: what it means to leave your home for another land, and what you hold on to and discard to survive and make a life. It shows, too, how those things may be similar or different for descendants, and the ways in which external events constantly alter these feelings.

Yet there is a universality to this experience, to anyone who has left one country to settle somewhere else. These journeys to a new land are often the result of big historical events: war, or shifting empires, or the drawing of arbitrary land borders. They have profound consequences on individual lives. So although the details of the lived experience can be overlooked, they should not be hidden but a key part of these histories. H

Kavita Puri is a journalist, author and broadcaster. Her BBC Radio 4 series *Three Pounds in My Pocket* is currently available on BBC Sounds

BBC RADIO 4

SAYEED FAMILY



Moments in time

LEFT TO RIGHT: Farah with her mother, Runi; Farah as a child on a summer holiday; and mother and daughter pictured in 2022

LETTERS

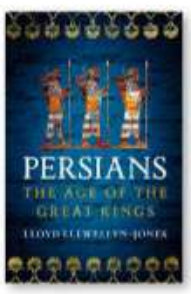
Félicette, the stray Parisian cat launched into space in 1963. As reader Ian MacDonald notes, she gained global fame

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Local heroes

As I was coming to the end of February's issue, I was delighted to read Priya Atwal's article about Ancient House Museum of Thetford Life (*Explore*, pictured below). I am always thrilled to find local museums in towns, usually hidden away and rarely well-advertised or signposted. Typically staffed by well-informed volunteers, they can contain the most intriguing items and personal stories from people who have donated items for display. Such wonderful institutions are a far cry from their city cousins, often relying on donated funds from visitors and local council grants, so they surely deserve a wider press.

We have several small local museums in mid-Kent, each providing a fascinating glimpse into the life of our neighbours in time. I should love to read more about such museums elsewhere in the country. Is there any chance of a series on local museums? I'm sure readers would be happy to submit details of their favourites. I'll put my hand up to cover Cranbrook and Tenterden museums!
Janet Poplett, Kent



We reward the *Letter of the Month* writer with a copy of a new history book. This issue, that is **Persians: The Age of the Great Kings** by Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones. You can read Lloyd's feature on the Persians on page 20

Store-cupboard solutions

The reference to carrots in John Martin's feature about Britain's Second World War battle against hunger (March) made me smile.

My mother worked for the Ministry of Food during the war as a food advice organiser. She travelled throughout predominantly Hertfordshire and Essex, demonstrating how to make the best of whatever foodstuffs were available. Among the delights were making bread with lentils and "using your carrot juice to make orange jelly"!

She even did a five-minute broadcast for the BBC on 20 December 1945 on desserts for Christmas lunch: Orange Whip and Fruit Cream. I still have the script.
Judy Howlett, Hertfordshire

Fussy eaters

The article on "Dig for Victory" brought back childhood memories of being raised during rationing, although we never felt that we were in any way deprived. It has left me with a legacy of always clearing my plate, of never being fussy about what I eat, and even now of being surprised that so much is available out of season. I still enjoy vegetables such as broccoli, parsnips, swedes and cabbage.

The diet we followed in those days was certainly very much more basic than today, but it was healthy, and we did not suffer from the incidence of obesity we now endure – partially because we ate fruit rather than the kinds of desserts preferred today. However, we have not learnt our lesson, as we import approximately 40 per cent of our food, and some advocate increasing this proportion still further. In the event of another major interruption to supplies, we should be in an even worse position than in the 1940s.
Colin Bullen, Kent

Celebrating Seacole

I found Helen Rappaport's article on Mary Seacole interesting (April), but felt that her angle on Seacole said little that was different to the Key Stage 4 history of medicine textbooks. Far from presenting her as Florence Nightingale's counterpart, the books stressed the ad hoc nature of what she did to help the soldiers. No mention was made of a hospital but, rather, a hotel for the officers and, with the profits she made, we assumed that she was able to provide free treatment to the ordinary soldiers. Also, while she may not have carried soldiers off the battlefield, there's much evidence that she would go on to the field to help them in situ.

One thing is certain. I taught for roughly 40 years, and my students infinitely preferred Mary Seacole to Florence Nightingale long before it became fashionable to do so – no doubt finding the pictures of the latter sitting up in bed somewhat underwhelming.
Jo Jones, Darlington

Unequal franchise

In the explanation of the significance of 3 February 1870 in US history (*Anniversaries*), the impact of the 15th Amendment to the United States Constitution is overstated. The amendment that was ratified on the above date granted the right to vote to black men only. Women in the US would not gain suffrage until the passage of the 19th amendment in 1920.
Sam Ketterman, Maryland

Dancing into the history books

I was interested to see the piece in the March issue about Irish dance, Michael Flatley and *Riverdance* (*Encounters Diary*). The end of the article referred to "the influence of Irish dance on the development of tap in the US". In 1989 – some five years before he became a household name thanks to *Riverdance* – Michael Flatley had already set a world record as the fastest tap dancer.

I was a member of the editorial team that compiled *The Guinness Book of Records* at the time, and exchanged letters with him and spoke to him on the phone about his attempt to beat the record. He succeeded in setting a new record with 28 taps in one second!
Nicholas Heath-Brown, Hertfordshire

Heavenly creatures

Stephen Walker correctly states that the achievements of most of the animals launched into space have been forgotten or ignored (*A Space Menagerie*, March). There are a couple of exceptions, however. The bodies of Russian space dogs Belka and Strelka were preserved after their deaths, and are now in Russia's Museum of Cosmonautics in

Michael Flatley in 2011. Reader Nicholas Heath-Brown recalls the dancer's groundbreaking feats

ALAMY

A shipment of soya flour from Canada and the US arrives in Britain, 1943. The nation has not learnt the dietary lessons of the Second World War, suggests reader Colin Bullen

GETTY IMAGES

Moscow. Strelka's puppy Pushinka was later gifted to the Kennedys, and went on to live happily in the White House.

French space cat Félicette was celebrated on the postage stamps of several countries, and became an international celebrity. In 2018, enough money was raised to build a five-foot high bronze statue to her at the International Space University near Strasbourg. Félicette is depicted sitting on a globe and looking up at the stars.
Ian MacDonald, Essex

Editor's note: We received a small number of reader letters in response to April's *My History Hero* interview with John Bercow, which was published shortly after a report by an Independent Expert Panel chaired by Sir Stephen Irwin criticised his behaviour towards his Parliamentary staff – a finding that Mr Bercow disputes. Our interview with John Bercow was conducted some months ago, in late 2021, and the issue had already been printed prior to the report's release.

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Page 68

EMPIRE OF THE GREATS

Not even a 2,000-year smear campaign, instigated by the Greeks, can obscure the staggering achievements of the ancient Persians. **Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones** tells the story of the Iranian dynasty that forged the greatest empire the world had ever known

ON THE EH PODCAST

Fighting back
A scene from a relief at Persepolis, ancient Persia's magnificent ceremonial capital. It's high time that we liberated the wonders of the Persians from the tyranny of the classical tradition, says Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones

ALAMY

Around 1943, Robert Graves penned a poem. In it he took his customary sideways glance at the world of antiquity and chose as his theme the subject of war and propaganda. He focused on the battle of Marathon, fought in 499 BC between the forces of Athens and Persia. Hailed as a magnificent triumph for the Athenians, Marathon had quickly become mythologised in the Greek-speaking world. When the Persians were repelled from Greek soil, the legend of the heroic fight for freedom over despotism was born.

And that's not all. For Europe, in this reading of history, was also born at Marathon. So was the British empire. This is why, writing in 1846, John Stuart Mill could claim that, "even as an event in English history", the battle of Marathon was "more important than the battle of Hastings".

Robert Graves questioned that stance and preferred to read the fallout of Marathon as the ultimate triumph of a successful and long-lived Athenian propaganda campaign.

Persian power stretched from Libya in the south-west to the Indus Valley in the north-east

Hidden beauty
A solid-gold Persian bracelet, adorned with griffins, dating to the fifth or fourth century BC. Artefacts such as this belie the view, popularised during the Enlightenment, that the Persians were barbaric despots

AKG-IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN

Spinning a tale
Darius the Great receives news of the Persian defeat at Marathon – a clash that has defined perceptions of the Persians in the west for more than two millennia – as depicted on a Greek red-figure vase

A view from the victor
The Cyrus Cylinder is an extraordinary inscribed document, made of clay, that describes the Persian conquest of Babylon. It was presumably written on the orders of Cyrus the Great, 2,600 years ago

GETTY IMAGES

The poem that Graves penned in 1943 – *The Persian Version* – is therefore written from the viewpoint of the "truth-loving Persians" themselves. For them, he stresses, Marathon was little more than a "trivial skirmish" at the western fringes of their empire and certainly not the "grandiose, ill-starred attempt / to conquer Greece" that had been dreamed up by the Athenians and sold lock, stock and barrel to British public schoolboys for generations.

Take a look at a map (see page 25) of south-east Europe, north Africa and western Asia at the start of the fifth century BC, when the battle of Marathon was fought, and it's hard not to conclude that Graves was on to something. Between the rise of Cyrus the Great in the mid-sixth century BC and the death of his descendant Darius III two centuries later, the Persians (with the formidable Achaemenid dynasty at their head) presided over the greatest empire the world had yet seen.

At its greatest extent, the Achaemenids' territory stretched from Libya in the south-west to the Indus Valley in the north-east, encompassing modern-day nations including Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Greece. This was an empire built on an advanced infrastructure, a degree of tolerance towards diverse cultures and religions and, when required, overwhelming force. Given the immense power that they wielded for 200 years, is it any surprise that Graves concluded that the Persians may well have regarded their entanglements with the Greeks as a mere sideshow?

Graves was, however, swimming against the tide. During the Enlightenment two centuries earlier, intellectuals had begun to theorise as to why the west had become so dominant in the world order and had been so successful in the spread of white civilisation. They came up with a radical theory: European superiority came not from Christianity, as had previously been thought, but from a cultural tradition that began in ancient Greece. The Greeks, they stipulated, invented freedom and rationality, and Rome then spread these precious gifts across Europe in a series of civilising imperial conquests. Other cultures on the fringes of Greece and Rome were barbaric. The worst and most threatening of the barbarians were the Persians, with their quest for world domination.

Since the era of the Greco-Persian Wars, the Persians have been at the receiving end of a smear campaign in which they have been cast as the tyrannical oppressors of the free world. This has been hugely damaging for the study of the history of ancient Persia – and it's a problem that's been compounded by the fact that the Persians never wrote narrative history in the way that the Greeks did, instead relying on oral storytelling, poetry and song to transmit their past.

Saved from tyranny

So what to do? How can historians go about liberating the Persians from the tyranny of the classical tradition? How can we relate the rise and fall of their remarkable empire from a perspective that was for so long written out of history – their own? The answer is provided by a dizzying, but wonderfully illuminating, assortment of genuine sources. There are royal inscriptions in the Old Persian language; there are rich archives of cuneiform documents written on clay which tell us about

Big beast A cylinder seal image shows Darius I as a great huntsman, killing lions – part of a vocabulary of kingship that appeared throughout the near east

BRIDGEMAN/GETTY IMAGES/NEAR EASTERN, IRANIAN, PERSIAN, ACHAEMENID, 525–330 B.C.GOLD WITH INLAYS OF TURQUOISE, CARNELIAN, AND LAPIS LAZULI DIAMETER: 5.1 CM (2 IN)/MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON/ MARY S. AND EDWARD J. HOLMES FUND 1971.256/ PHOTOGRAPH © 2022 MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

the workings of the empire, its economy and its civil service; there is a dossier of art – wall reliefs, textile designs, gold and silver work – and a magnificent heritage of archaeology to tell the inside story of Persia's past. Thanks to the emergence of those historical treasures, we have finally been able to give the Persians a platform from which to tell their own story.

A king on the rise

That story begins in the middle of the sixth century with the rise of one of the most remarkable rulers of the ancient world: Cyrus II, or "the Great". When Cyrus came to power in 559 BC, Persia was a small kingdom located in south-west Iran, one of several Iranian tribes in the vassalage of the kingdom of the Medes. By the time he died in 530 BC, it was well on its way to superpower status.

The breakthrough moment came in 550 BC when Cyrus, supported by a coalition of south Iranian tribes, marched north to attack the Medes and sacked their capital, Ecbatana. He then moved against the powerful kingdom of Lydia in Asia Minor, capturing its wealthy capital, Sardis – a victory that cleared the path for him to seize other important cities along the Ionian coast.

Another milestone in Persia's rise arrived in 540 BC when Cyrus launched an attack on the Neo-Babylonian empire, centred in Mesopotamia, and entered the fabulously wealthy city of Babylon. The Persian ruler apparently met no military or political resistance, and maintained the status quo by allowing Babylonian officials to continue in their governmental and religious offices.

Power aid An earring showing the god Ahuramazda, who, the Persians believed, granted their kings their awesome power

Rebellion against Persian authority was seen as a revolt against divine authority

Much of our knowledge of the fall of Babylon comes from the Cyrus Cylinder, composed on Cyrus's orders, although written from a Babylonian perspective. As a piece of imperial propaganda, the Cylinder attempts to legitimise Cyrus's conquest of Babylon by representing the king as the chosen champion of the god Marduk.

Following the conquest of Babylonia, Cyrus forged a truly international empire. At Pasargadae in Iran, the king built a tomb and a palace planted with a formal garden irrigated by a myriad of water-channels. The result was nothing short of a desert paradise – one that, with its architectural representations of the cultures now under Persian rule, acted as an empire in miniature.

The royal rhetoric emphasised that all conquered nations of this empire were united in service to the Great King, whose laws they were required to obey and whose majesty they were obliged to uphold. The king was championed by the great god Ahuramazda, who granted the monarch the gift of kingship in order to stabilise world order, since unrest and rebellion were linked to cosmic disorder. Rebellion against Persian authority was seen as a revolt against divine

The Persian empire at its greatest extent, under Darius I

authority because the Great King served Ahuramazda's will on Earth.

Rites and rituals

Cyrus the Great died in war, fighting a central Asian tribe called the Massagetae. The king's demise would no doubt have dealt a heavy blow to the Persian imperial project, but it wasn't enough to reverse the empire's expansion. In fact, Cyrus's successor, Cambyses II, added a significant prize to Persia's imperial possessions: Egypt.

Greek sources portray Cambyses as a mad despot, tyrannically oppressing his subjects and impiously debasing the religious traditions of his conquered nations, but archaeological evidence from Egypt paints a different picture. It suggests that the king adopted a policy of religious harmony: inscriptions from the Serapeum in Memphis (dated 524 BC) confirm that he honoured the death of a sacred bull with due rites and rituals.

The laissez faire attitude to diverse religious and cultural beliefs exhibited by Cambyses appears to have been a hallmark of Persian rule. Yet the Achaemenids could quickly employ brute force to get their own way – as is proven by the rise of the man who would rival Cyrus II as the most accomplished of all Persian rulers, and preside over the empire at its zenith: Darius the Great.

Darius seized power in 522 BC from Cyrus's son Bardiya in a bloody palace coup, and was utterly ruthless in bringing the empire to heel when it was rocked by a wave of revolts. In little more than a year, he had defeated, captured and executed the rebel leaders and for the rest of his 36-year reign he was never threatened with an uprising again.

Contemporary Persian texts attest to the scope of Darius's power, and his ferocity in defending it. According to one source, Ahuramazda himself had given to Darius "the kingship of this wide Earth with many lands in it – Persia, Media, and the other lands of other tongues, of the mountains and the plains, of this side of the ocean and the far side of the ocean, and of this side of the desert and the far side of the desert".

In another text, the king himself warns of the dire punishments he was prepared to mete out to those who dared to rebel. "I am furious in the strength of my revenge with both hands and both feet," he is said to have declared.

Yet Darius's formidable reputation wasn't just built on raw military might. He was particularly concerned with implementing empire-wide building and engineering projects. In Egypt he built a canal between the Nile and the Red Sea. In the Iranian heartland he started a mammoth building programme at Persepolis, which would become the ceremonial capital of his empire

GETTY IMAGES/MAP BY PAUL HEWITT – BATTLEFIELD DESIGN

TIMELINE

The rise and fall of the Persian empire

559 BC Cyrus II (the Great), ascends the throne and begins the unification of the tribes of Persia.

539 BC Cyrus marches on Babylon and begins to rule there.

525 BC Cyrus's son **Cambyses II** conquers Egypt, north Africa and Nubia.

522 BC Darius I (the Great), right, seizes the throne and establishes the Achaemenid dynasty.

c515 BC Darius begins works on the construction of the **great citadel of Persepolis** in south-west Iran.

499 BC Darius crushes an uprising in Lydia, western Anatolia, but is defeated by the Greeks at the **battle of Marathon**.

480 BC Darius's successor, **Xerxes**, captures Athens but is forced to quit Greece after a succession of military reversals.

423 BC Darius II ascends the throne. His reign is marred by a series of revolts in the western satrapies.

343 BC Artaxerxes III reconquers Egypt following its break from the empire at the beginning of the fourth century BC.

336 BC Darius III ascends the throne. His reign coincides with the rise of Alexander the Great, who defeats the Persians in battle at Issus in 333 BC and Gaugamela in 331.

330 BC Alexander the Great (right) destroys Persepolis. Darius III, the last Achaemenid Great King, is murdered by his cousin Bessus.

(see box, right). The Elamite city of Susa (western Iran) was given a new lease of life when it became the administrative capital.

Presiding over a 2-million-square-mile empire presented an enormous logistical challenge, even for a ruler as capable as Darius. His solution was to divide the empire's territories into administrative satrapies (provinces) and to hand out the top posts to a tiny group of men drawn exclusively from the highest echelons of the Persian aristocracy. These satraps attempted to foster healthy interactions with local elites and they often used well-established regional administrative systems to work for them. The smooth running of the empire relied on their ability to ensure that the levy of tribute required from each region was maintained – and, for the most part, they appeared to have achieved that. In fact, the satrapy system is one of the chief reasons why the Persians were able to control such a vast empire for so long.

Another factor that gave the Persian empire a critical competitive edge was the quality of its infrastructure. First-rate roads connected the main satrapal centres with the imperial core. These were measured in 3.7-mile intervals (known as *parasangs*), while road-stations were set up around every

Roar material
A Persian vessel featuring a fantastical leonine creature, dating to the fifth century BC

By melding both Egyptian and Assyrian styles, Persian art reflected the empire's unity and diversity

A WONDER OF THE WORLD

How Darius the Great turned Persepolis into the empire's foremost citadel

Rising out of the sands of the Marv Dasht in south-west Iran, the citadel of Persepolis is one of the great sites of antiquity, and one of the best-preserved royal palaces of the ancient near east. Darius the Great began the construction of the palace around 515 BC, and it was greatly added to by Xerxes and each of the successive Achaemenid monarchs. It was still in the process of being built when, in 330 BC, Alexander of Macedon (the Great) burned it to the ground.

The buildings were built of locally quarried stone, although the craftsmen and enslaved people who worked on the site were drawn from all over Persia's vast empire – some 30,000 cuneiform tablets (the so-called Persepolis Fortification and Treasury texts) attest to the presence of different peoples of the empire.

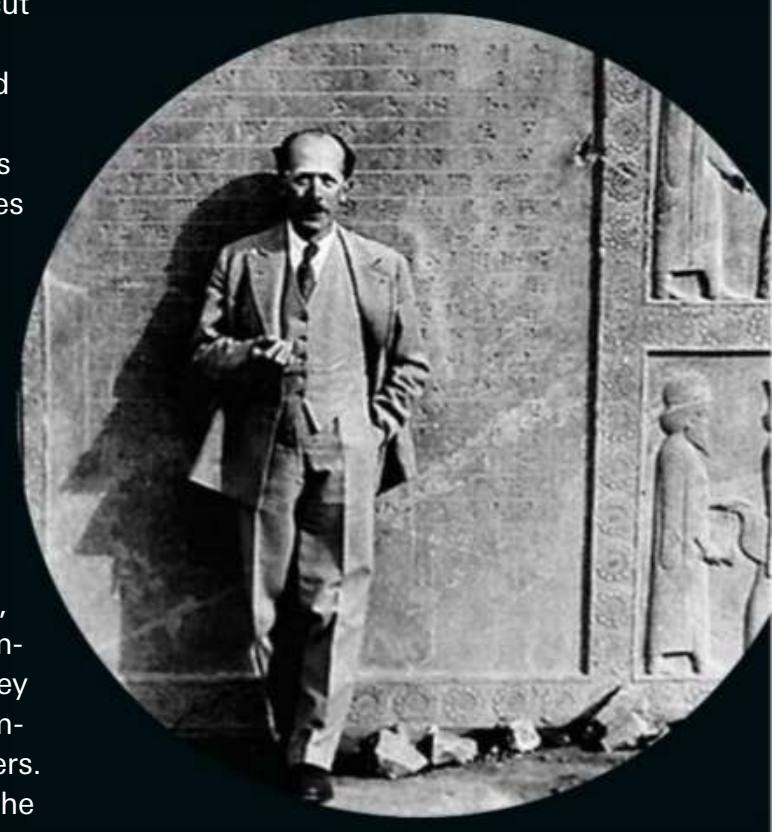
First excavated by Ernst Herzfeld and the Oriental Institute of Chicago in 1931, Persepolis was found to consist of a vast complex of military quarters, treasuries and storerooms, private living quarters, large reception rooms, cavernous audience halls and hill-cut royal tombs.

The palace complex was divided into public and private spaces. Ambassadors, nobles and courtiers would, by and large, find themselves in the formal spaces, the outer courts, of the palace such as the Apadana, or throne room. It was in this vast 20-metre-high pillared hall that the Great King held audience and received the obeisance of his court.

Courtiers and servants with close connections to the Great King, like his advisers and eunuchs, as well as members of the royal family, made up the inner court, and they occupied the rear of the palace complex, away from the eyes of strangers.

Despite its scale, it is clear that the whole court could not have been accommodated on the Persepolis terrace itself. The number of servants required to attend to the needs of the immediate members of the royal family would have run into huge figures alone, while the Great King himself was said to have had no less than 360 royal concubines. Persia's royal women played a key role in the politics of the empire and although they could not rule in their own right, they had access to power through their intimate relationships with the Great Kings, as mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, or concubines. They were often located close to the king.

It seems certain that the majority of the court was housed in tented accommodation, scattered around Persepolis for several miles. The Persian court was, after all, peripatetic by nature. Administrative documents from Persepolis tell us that the Great King and his court systematically criss-crossed the empire, shifting locations between Susa, Babylon and Ecbatana annually, before coming to rest at Persepolis, it is assumed, for the festivities of Nowrouz (the Persian "New Year" celebrated on the spring equinox in March).



Among the ruins
Ernst Herzfeld, the German archaeologist who excavated Persepolis in the 1930s. Alexander the Great's destruction of the city in 330 BC symbolised the fate of the once mighty Persian empire

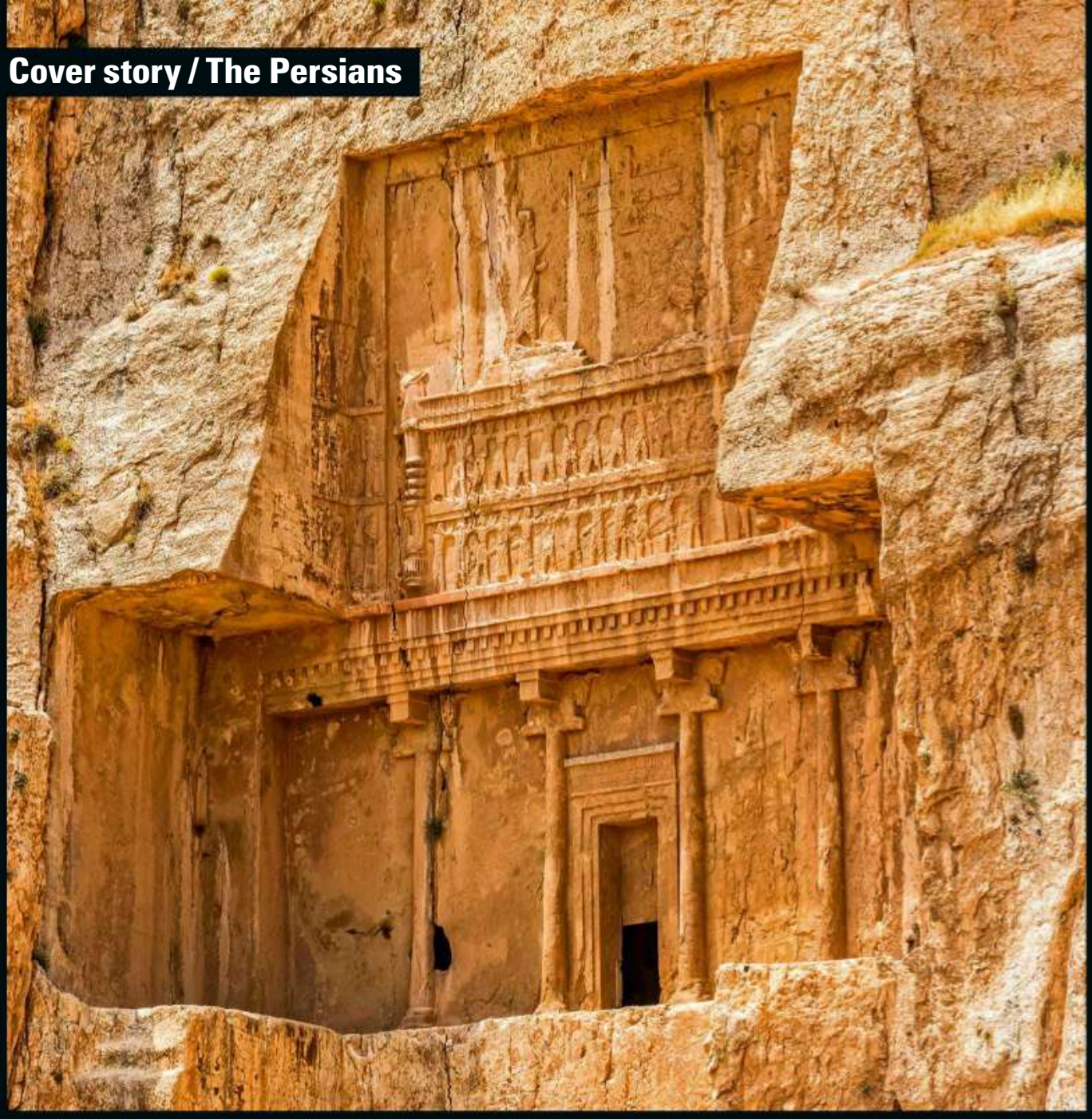
ALAMY

Power base
Persian courtiers in the throne room at Persepolis, as depicted in a relief detail. Satraps from across the empire descended on Darius the Great's citadel to pay homage to the Great King

On the rise
The central stairway of Darius the Great's palace at Persepolis. This photograph was taken in 1933 shortly after its discovery

Skilled build
The ruins of Darius's palace complex at Persepolis. Darius's reign marked a high point in Persian building, engineering and artistic expression

ALAMY/AKG-IMAGES/CLIPART



Dead and buried
Darius I's tomb at Naqsh i-Rustam near Persepolis. For all his achievements, Darius is chiefly viewed in the west as the despot who lost the battle of Marathon

The end is nigh
A modern relief sculpture imagines Alexander the Great's victory over Darius III at the battle of Issus in 333 BC. The final Persian Great King had no answer to the Macedonian juggernaut

ALAMY

17 miles to accommodate the quick change of fresh horses for any imperial messenger carrying official documents. Herodotus estimated that the distance from Susa to Sardis in western Anatolia (450 parasangs – or 1,700 miles) could be covered in just 90 days.

The sheer vastness of Darius's empire is also reflected in Achaemenid art. This was essentially an eclectic mix of styles and motifs drawn from different parts of the empire, but fused together to produce a distinctive and harmonious look that was distinctly Persian. Egyptian and Assyrian motifs (like solar disks and winged genii) were melded together to reflect in material form both the diversity and unity of the empire.

In a way, Achaemenid art was always *royal* art since the motifs created for the glorification of the king are found time and again in almost all Persian material artefacts, ranging from vast rock cut sculptures – such as those found at Bisitun or the tombs of the kings at Naqsh i-Rustam and Persepolis – to miniscule engravings found on gemstones.

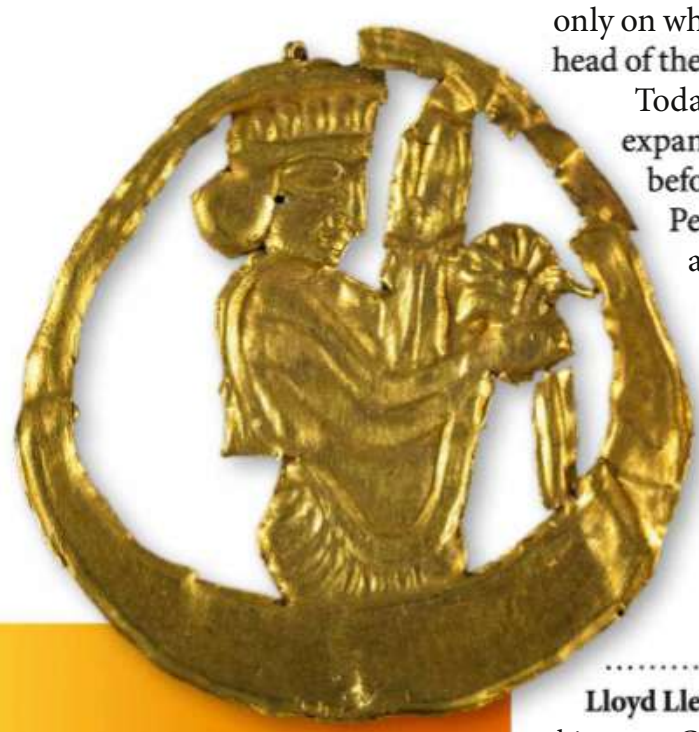
Exaggerated claims

For all his accomplishments as a warrior and an administrator, Darius the Great is chiefly remembered, in the west at least, as the despot whose designs on Greece were brought to a bloody end at the battle of Marathon. While Darius may have had ambitions to incorporate Greece into his empire, Herodotus's account of Greco-Persian tensions wildly exaggerates the Persian response to the Greek resistance.

Darius died in 486 BC, and the task of expanding the empire was left to his son Xerxes. Xerxes could show ruthlessness when required, swiftly stamping out rebellions in Egypt and Babylonia. But like his father, the new king also found the Greeks a tough nut to crack. Although he captured Athens in 480 BC, Xerxes' forces suffered damaging defeats to the Greeks both at sea (Salamis) and on land (at Plataea and Mycale). Faced with the reality that Greece would never be incorporated into his empire, Xerxes elected to abandon his invasion and march home.

The following century and a half witnessed palace coups, internal rebellions, the loss and reconquest of Egypt, and the crushing of a revolt in Sidon (in modern-day Lebanon). But, for all these crises, Persia's primacy continued unchallenged – until, in the 330s BC, a figure emerged in Greece who would topple the entire Achaemenid edifice in a few short years: Alexander the Great.

In their own words
A clay tablet from an administrative archive discovered at Persepolis in the 1930s. Indigenous sources are constantly shedding new light on the Persians' world, writes Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones



Golden era
A gold fitting showing a woman wearing a Persian robe and diadem, 6th–4th century BC

The Achaemenids ran their empire as a family business – that's why the Persian empire lasted so long

The king charged with halting the Macedon juggernaut was Darius III. That he failed to do so has proven a stain on his reputation ever since, but in reality Darius was a brave soldier and an able administrator who posed a serious threat to Alexander's dreams of glory. But not even Darius could prevent two major losses to Alexander in battle – at Issus in 333 BC and again at Gaugamela in 331. Following the second defeat, Darius fled to Ecbatana in western Iran to try to raise fresh troops, and from there to Bactria, where he was killed by his own cousin, Bessus. Darius's death in 330 BC marked the end of the Persian empire, and a new phase in world history – one that would see Alexander the Great build an empire that would eclipse even that of the Persians.

Despite revolts, frontier problems, succession struggles and regicides, the Persian empire had held onto its enormous territories and diverse subject populations for more than two centuries. The question that inevitably arises of these facts, therefore, is not why did the Persian empire come to an end, but rather how did it stay successful for so long? There is one fundamental answer to that question: the Achaemenid family never lost its exclusive hold on the kingship. The Achaemenids ran their empire as a family business. There were rebellions within the imperial house, it is true, but they never focused on establishing separatist states, only on who should sit on the throne as the head of the Achaemenid family.

Today the study of the Persian empire is expanding and flourishing as never before. Textual studies of indigenous Persian sources continue to appear, and since the 1930s the archaeology of the empire has been producing unexpected finds which constantly force scholars to rethink our definitions of empire. To borrow from Robert Graves, it is now possible to tell the genuine Persian Version of Iran's rich history. H

Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones is professor of ancient history at Cardiff University and the director of the ancient Iran programme for the British Institute of Persian Studies (BIPS). His new book, *Persians: The Age of the Great Kings*, is published by Wildfire in April. You can listen to him discuss the Persian empire at *historyextra.com/persia-podcast*

LISTEN The BBC Radio 4 series **Through Persian Eyes** gave listeners a grand tour of the Persian empire. Listen here: *bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01k1ngy*

ALAMY/BRIDGEMAN

BRIDGEMAN/GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY/DREAMSTIME

The family **behind** the Tudors

The name Tudor has reverberated down the centuries, but another family lurked in the background, helping the dynasty to greatness – and sometimes seeking to tear it down. Joanne Paul chronicles the meteoric rise and deadly fall of the Dudleys

ON THE EH PODCAST

Climbing the greasy pole
Our collage shows three generations of the Dudley family (anti-clockwise, from top right): Edmund Dudley (c1462–1510), who established the family at court; his son John Dudley (1504–53); and his grandson Robert Dudley (1532/33–88). These men helped lift up the Tudor dynasty, but two were executed

Right-hand man In this c1575 allegory, Edward VI sits beside the deathbed of his father, Henry VIII. John Dudley (seated, fourth from right) rose to prominence under Henry and grew in power during Edward's reign

Queen Elizabeth I was resplendent, the crimson red of her wig offset by flowing white and the flash of steel, as she spoke to the troops assembled at West Tilbury on 19 August 1588. Her words, "I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king", would echo though the ages.

This was precisely what the architect of that moment, Sir Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, had in mind when he had written to his queen less than two weeks before, asking her to visit the troops at Tilbury: "Thus shall you comfort, not only these thousands, but many more that shall hear of it." It was no accident that he stood beside her on that day as she publicly commended him: "My lieutenant general… whom never prince commanded a more noble or worthy general." The words were recorded for posterity, just as he had intended them to be.

That Robert Dudley, the brother, son and grandson of traitors, should stand beside the queen at such a moment would have shocked many. Four years earlier, he had been described in the pamphlet *Leicester's Commonwealth* as a man "of so extreme ambition, pride, falsehood and treachery, so born, so bred up, so nuzzled in treason from his infancy, descended of a tribe of traitors". Nevertheless, every Tudor monarch had relied on the Dudley family for security, support and popularity. Members of the house of Dudley had been sacrificed to build up the house of Tudor. The Dudleys had, in turn, climbed high on the favour of their Tudor monarchs, at times almost supplanting them. Theirs is a story of passion, ambition, bloodshed and love, with the crown as the highest prize, and the executioner's block reward for a fall.

The pride penalty

In April 1509 Henry VII's corpse grew cold in his chamber at Richmond Palace while his ministers conferred. Wearing fake smiles, they ushered in their allies, to whom they broke the news. The king's death was an opportunity for sweeping change. Entrenched enemies could be removed if cards were played just right. At the top of this list, as the ministers gathered, was one man in particular, a seemingly unimportant lawyer from a lesser branch of a baronial family: Edmund Dudley.

Edmund owed his rise to prominence to Henry VII. By 1504, he had become one of the king's central ministers in the exaction of coin from his subjects. In four short years he had raised almost £220,000 for the crown, about £150m in today's money. He had also made an advantageous marriage to Elizabeth Grey, daughter of the Viscount Lisle. She had borne him a son, whom they named John.

Alongside filling the king's coffers Edmund had amassed for himself all the hallmarks of prestige. He wore expensive black robes with hints of crimson, silver and gold, and doublets of purple, velvet and tinselled satin. The rooms of the family home in Candlewick were filled with silver plate, gilded candlesticks and cups, bearing the Dudley arms.

The resentment and anger of those from whom he had extracted funds was palatable. As a contemporary chronicle recorded: "He was so proud, it was easier to speak to the highest duke in the land than get an audience with Edmund Dudley." Edmund, however, gave little regard to such criticism. It would be his undoing.

Henry VIII's reputation for swift justice and majestic display was built on the labour and blood of Edmund Dudley

As the king's health failed over the winter of 1508–09, Edmund's enemies gathered. After Henry's death in the spring, Edmund and his family were left vulnerable to the attacks of those he had never bothered to make his allies. The new king entered the Tower of London to prepare for his coronation in June 1509; Edmund had also entered the Tower, but to await a sadder fate – hoping that this new king would value the work he had done to gild his reign.

In the end, Henry VIII made the decision that would define the relationship between the house of Tudor and house of Dudley for generations. Realising that his popularity was predicated on the destruction of the detested Edmund Dudley, he sent the order for Edmund's execution, which was carried out on 17 August 1510. Henry VIII then burned through the money Edmund had collected in a few short years, his reputation for swift justice and majestic display built on the labour and blood of Edmund Dudley.

John Dudley was about six when his father was executed by Henry VIII. A little over a decade later he was serving this king, joining diplomatic and military missions. This was due in large part to his mother's quick marriage to the king's illegitimate uncle, Arthur Plantagenet. As a boy, John had been placed with the Guildford family, who had powerful court connections. When he came of age, he married the girl he had grown up with, Jane Guildford. Together they would create a new powerful generation of the Dudley family, having 13 children over the course of their marriage, with nine surviving into adulthood.

Through the reign of Henry VIII and his

BRIDGEMAN

PEOPLE POWER

Our infographic pulls out several of the key figures in the house of Dudley, and some of the connections they formed with the Tudor monarchs and their consorts

HENRY VII

Raised significant funds for him as his minister

c1462–1510
EDMUND DUDLEY

Married

c1482–c1525
ELIZABETH (GREY)

HENRY VIII

Executed by him

Served him on diplomatic and military missions

EDWARD VI

Became lord president of his council

1504–53
JOHN DUDLEY

Married

1508/09–55
JANE (GUILDFORD)

Became close friends

KATHERINE PARR

MARY I

Executed by her

Strongly supported her nine days as queen

Became allies to try to save her sons

PHILIP II OF SPAIN

1537–54
JANE (GREY)

Married

c1535–54
GUILDFORD DUDLEY

1532/33–88
ROBERT DUDLEY

Enjoyed the status of the queen's favourite

c1530–86
MARY DUDLEY

Married

1529–86
HENRY SIDNEY

Served as her lady-in-waiting

ELIZABETH I

ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN

many queens, John and Jane served dutifully. They had come into the circles of power largely through the patronage of Anne Boleyn and Thomas Cromwell, adapting readily to the evangelicalism of the Reformation. Their friendship with the Seymour family assured their continued favour under Henry's third wife, Jane Seymour, and both were placed in the household of Anne of Cleves.

The rise of Katherine Howard and her ancient and conservative family threatened their standing, but not for long; John himself carried the notes of Katherine's damning confessions to the king. Jane Dudley was perhaps even more skilled than her husband John at making connections at court, and counted Henry VIII's final queen, Katherine Parr, as a close friend.

John had twice served on the battlefields of France, conducted raids on the northern border and defended England at sea as lord high admiral. So it was that as Henry VIII breathed his last, the Dudley family stood alongside the Seymours, kin to the new king, as one of the realm's most powerful houses.

The queenmaker

On Edward VI's accession John Dudley was made Earl of Warwick, a position that recalled the powerful earls of the previous century, including Warwick the Kingmaker, who had determined so much of the dynastic conflict of the Wars of the Roses. Like the earls of old, John was a military force that could be called upon to enforce, or undermine, a regime.

In 1549 that is precisely what he did. In defiance of Henry VIII's will, the new king's uncle, Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, had been named lord protector, and was ruling with the authority of a king and the arbitrariness of a tyrant. Having put down Kett's rebellion against Seymour, Dudley marched his troops to London and overthrew his old friend. At his trial Seymour defended himself admirably, but admitted to the court that he had "considered" murdering his friend John Dudley. He was executed on 22 January 1552, leaving John as the most powerful man in the country – lord president of a council with a 14-year-old for a king.

What happened next is shrouded in mystery. Edward VI grew ill, and by spring 1553 it was clear he would not recover. As he faced his death, Edward changed the succession set out by his father, skipping over his two half-sisters, Mary and Elizabeth, and placing the crown on the head of his cousin, Lady Jane Grey. The question is why. Certainly, Jane was a devoted evangelical, like Edward, and could be counted on to continue his religious reforms; Mary was a Catholic and would be sure to reverse them.

John Dudley became the most powerful man in the country, lord president of a council with a 14-year-old for a king

More immediately concerning to Edward was a search not just for a Protestant heir, but a male one. Mary and Elizabeth were both unmarried, and thus unlikely to bear a male successor any time soon. Jane, however, was recently married, and could already be carrying the desired prince. This is where Dudley ambition makes the waters even murkier. Jane's new husband was none other than John Dudley's son, Guildford Dudley.

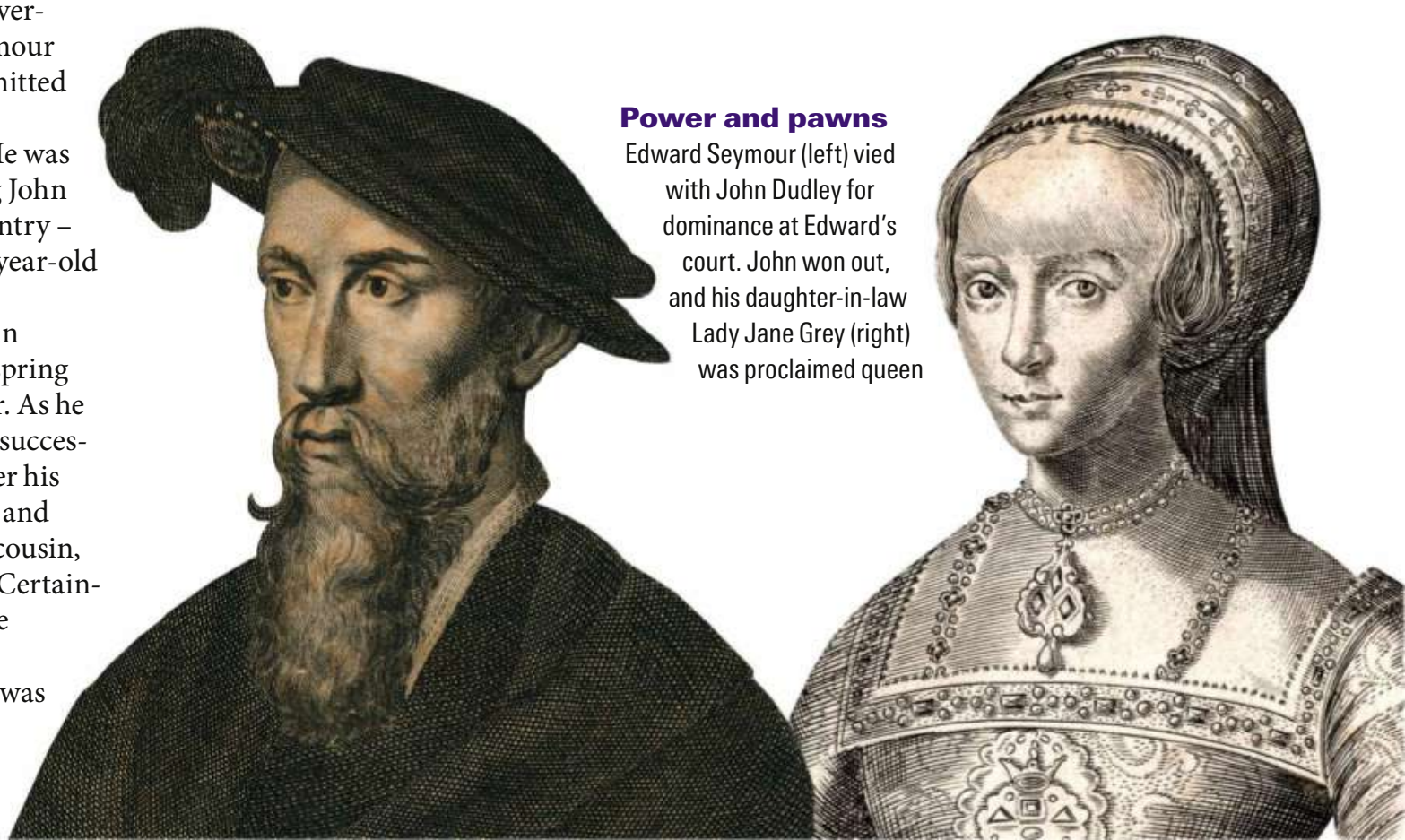
Guildford and Jane Grey had married in May 1553, as the king fell into his final illness. Did John's hand guide the young king to change the succession? Or had the headstrong Edward declared his will, regardless of John's intentions? Either way, John and his family supported the new regime with force. As Jane was proclaimed queen, Robert Dudley – another of John's sons – was sent north to collect the Lady Mary and bring her to heel. She was one step ahead, however, and had already fled to gather forces. As it became clear that Jane Grey's Catholic competitor would put up a fight, John and his sons rode out to meet Mary in battle. None was waged.

With the Dudleys away from London, the council betrayed them. John and his sons were arrested and imprisoned in the Tower. Like his father, John would hear the triumphant cannon through the stone walls of his prison but, unlike Edmund, he was imprisoned with his sons, with no hope that any would live to see the start of the new reign.

The redemption of the family would lie not in John Dudley or his sons, but in his wife Jane and her daughters. On the arrest of her husband and children, Jane made a desperate journey to see the new queen; she was refused an audience. Ill with worry, she wrote to her friends, begging them to intervene with the queen's new ladies for her "poor five sons" and "for their father who was to me and to my mind the most best gentleman that ever living woman was matched withal".

She would not save John, however. He had proven far too hated, as a "ragged bear most rank" – an allusion to the emblem of his earldom, the Warwick bear and ragged staff. A last-minute conversion to Catholicism, perhaps on the promise it would save him or his family, only made his unpopularity universal; Catholics and Protestants could unite under Mary in their condemnation of the detested duke. He was executed in August 1553 and six months later, Guildford and Lady Jane Grey also met their ends on the block.

But Jane Dudley did not give up. When Mary I married the future Philip II of Spain, bringing a flood of Spanish nobles into the court, Jane set to work ingratiating herself. Philip and his court needed English allies, and the Dudleys had nothing to lose and much to gain by supporting the new Spanish consort and his courtiers. With her last breath, Jane appealed to these new friends in her will; the pardon of her sons is dated to the day of her death.



GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY

Power and pawns
Edward Seymour (left) vied with John Dudley for dominance at Edward's court. John won out, and his daughter-in-law Lady Jane Grey (right) was proclaimed queen

Dancing to her tune Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, performs the volta with Queen Elizabeth I in this contemporary painting. He became one of her favourites, with many at court speculating about the precise nature of their relationship, and in 1562 was even apparently named "protector of the realm" in the event of her death

AKG IMAGES

Inspired by their mother, the remaining Dudley children served Philip II devotedly – not least by fighting in the French war, where the youngest Dudley son, Henry, died in 1557. They had also learned from their father and grandfather, however; it was surviving the transition between monarchs that was essential, and the reign of Mary I would soon come to an end. The cleverest among the court would begin to gravitate to the woman who must surely be her successor, Elizabeth.

An unlikely regent

Just four years into Elizabeth I's reign, in October 1562 the court found itself at the bedside of a monarch once again, unsure whether it would soon be another royal deathbed. The queen had contracted smallpox, and there was every chance she would not recover. As her ministers met and pondered the succession, Elizabeth's lady, Mary Sidney, born Mary Dudley, wiped sweat from her brow.

Both of the potential heirs had Dudley connections. There was Catherine Grey, the sister of Jane Grey, and thus a Dudley sister-in-law. The other was Henry Hastings, Earl of Huntington, who had married Katherine Dudley – Mary Sidney's sister. As reports went out, however, of what occurred between Elizabeth and her ministers as she prepared for her death, it appeared there was a Dudley even closer to the throne. Elizabeth had apparently named Robert Dudley "protector of the realm" and insisted that he be given £20,000 a year, about 10 per cent of the crown's annual income.

Much ink has been spent in trying to work out precisely the relationship between Robert Dudley and Elizabeth I. Were they childhood friends? Did they meet while both imprisoned in the Tower under Mary I? Did Robert secretly send funds to Elizabeth in the years before her sister's death? Was the talk of their marriage just talk? And, of course, did Dudley's courtship mean the Virgin Queen was perhaps not so virginal?

In the same breath in which Elizabeth named Robert protector of the realm, she also insisted that nothing improper had ever occurred between them. And yet she ordered that a £500 annual pension be given to the groom who slept in Robert's chamber, for what services the court could – and did – only guess. Similarly Robert had been gifting money to members of Elizabeth's chambers, presumably to grease wheels of access.

And access may have been possible. As Elizabeth's Master of the Horse, responsible for her mounts, Robert was expected to be in close proximity to the queen. And a year earlier Catherine Grey herself had successfully snuck from the queen's chambers into Robert's, to seek his protection when she informed the monarch of her secret (and scandalous) pregnancy. No one had been any the wiser.

Elizabeth recovered; she and Robert never wed. But he served her for the rest of his life, to great personal sacrifice. For years after the death of his first wife in 1560 Robert refused to marry, telling his mistress that he was desperate to "leav[e] some children behind me, being now the last of our house", but this hope was second to the need to retain the queen's good favour, which he risked by marrying. The birth of an illegitimate son and a final repudiation from Elizabeth prompted a secret marriage, but this resulted in only one son who died young.

In service to this Tudor monarch, the Dudleys sacrificed not just another member of the house, but its very continuance. Robert died in 1588, weeks after the speech at West Tilbury. And Elizabeth died childless in 1603, with the throne passing to King James VI & I. The house of Dudley and the house of Tudor had grown together and, both lacking an heir, ended together. H

Dr Joanne Paul is a senior lecturer in early modern history at the University of Sussex. Her latest book is *The House of Dudley*, out now, published by Michael Joseph

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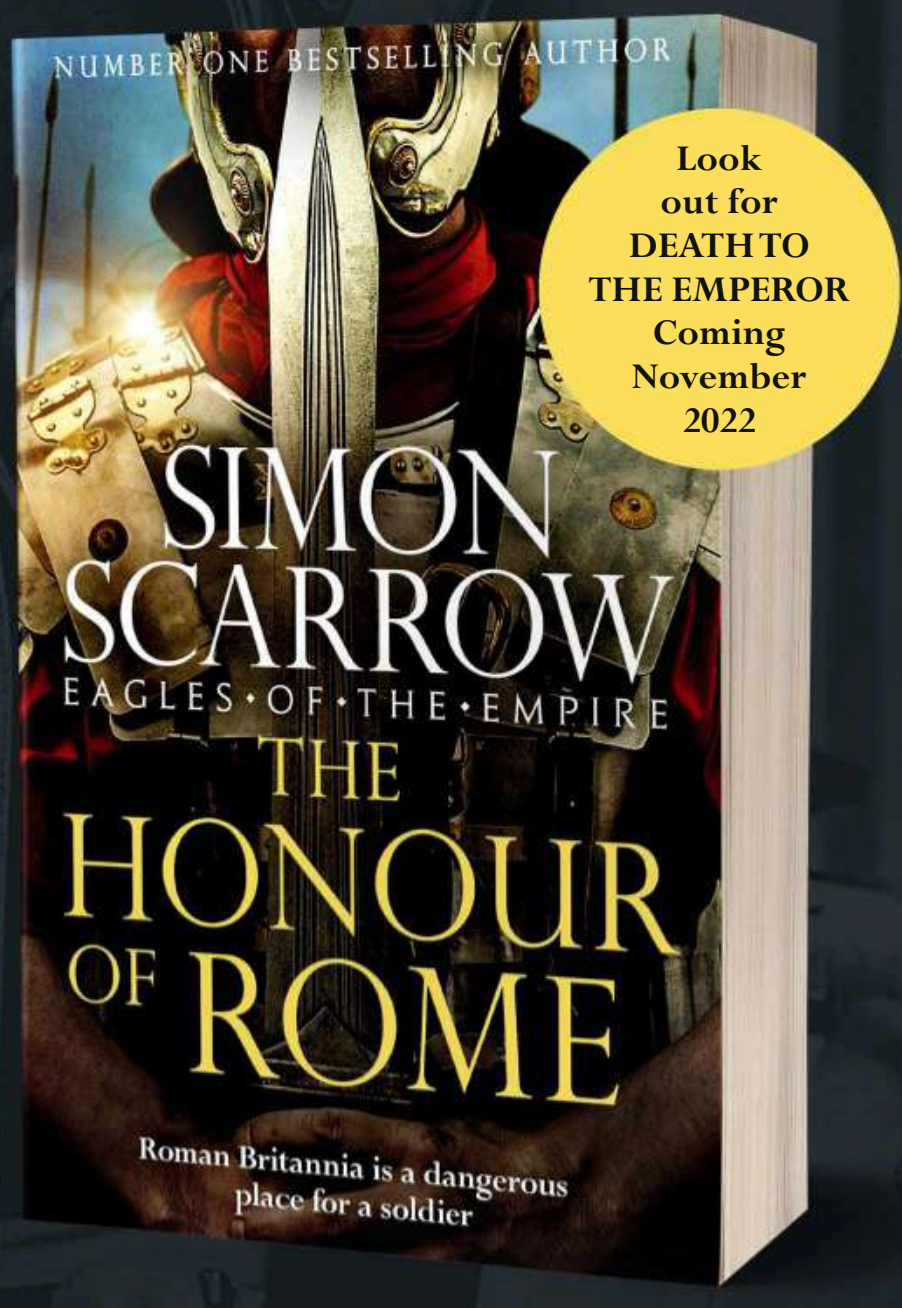
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Feather beds, cockfights and midnight flights to the moon

BRIDGEMAN

An assortment of birds, including a peacock, pigeon and swallows. Britons have historically feared and revered such creatures

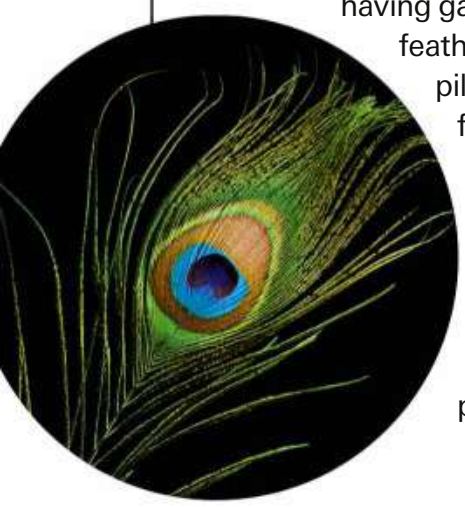
From seeing feathers as omens of death to saving soldiers with homing pigeons, our interactions with birds have always been contradictory. **Roy and Lesley Adkins** select five chapters from avian history to illuminate this complex relationship

ON THE EH PODCAST

1 Feathers, fowl and fear

Why the superstitious cast birds as omens of disaster and death

Due to their apparent link between the heavens and Earth, birds have long been revered, feared and assumed to be capable of predicting weather, marriage partners, disaster and death. While goose feathers and down didn't have any deadly connotations, many Britons were deeply against having game feathers in their feather mattresses and pillows, with pigeon feathers being particularly reviled.



In 19th-century Wiltshire, the Reverend William Grey said that whenever his housekeeper made pigeon pie, the feathers were burned: "She assured me that if a single feather found its way into a bed or pillow, they would be 'dying hard' [experiencing a lingering death] until the feather was removed." And Charlotte Latham, a vicar's wife, recorded: "You must not turn a feather-bed on a Sunday, or you will have fearful dreams for the rest of the week."

Peacock feathers (left) were especially dreaded, something that Hull headmaster John Nicholson mentioned in 1890: "Though peacock feathers are now fashionable and aesthetic, they are looked upon with disfavour by those of the old school, for these feathers were always deemed unlucky." He knew somebody who had burned an expensive gift – a peacock-feather firescreen – because of the terror of ill-luck.

A depiction of birds swarming around the Eddystone Lighthouse in 1901. Flocks were drawn to the lamps on foggy nights, during their migrations across the oceans

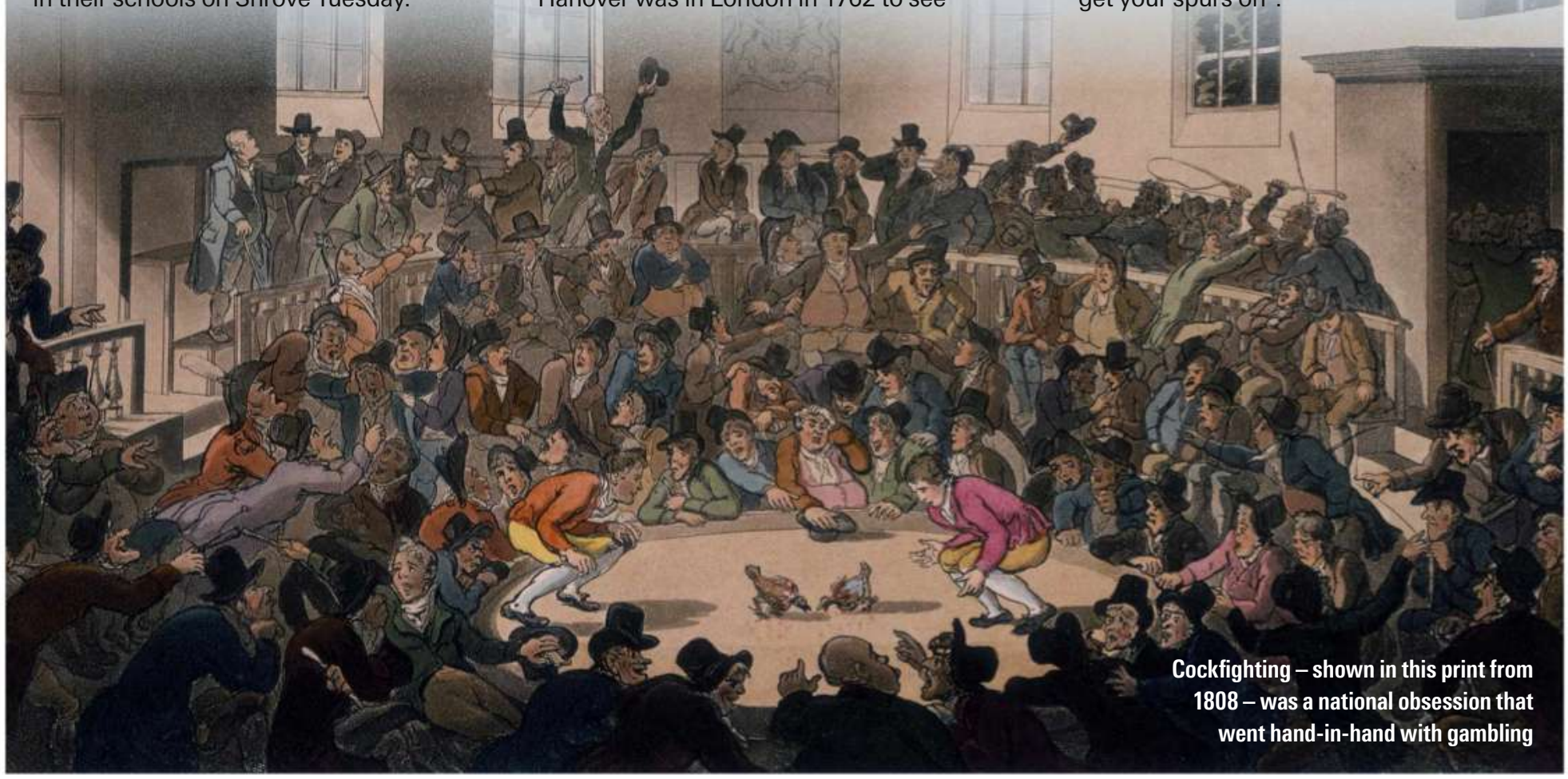
2 Britain's bloody sporting obsession

The country's passion for cockfighting united poor schoolboys and kings

Cockfighting, known as "the sod", was for centuries Britain's most popular sport, reaching a peak in the 18th century and banned only in 1849 (1895 in Scotland). Enjoyed by all classes, this national obsession was underpinned by gambling. Boys were actively encouraged to train fighting cocks for matches that were held in their schools on Shrove Tuesday.

Most cockfighting was staged in thousands of indoor and outdoor cockpits across the country – even in churches and churchyards. Specially bred fighting cocks were taken to fights in bags, and the bony spurs on their legs were sharpened or fitted with metal spurs to inflict worse injuries.

When Friedrich von Kielmansegge from Hanover was in London in 1762 to see George III's coronation, he attended the Royal Cockpit to see a cockfight "which lasted the whole of this week". He reported: "In the middle of a circle and a gallery surrounded by benches, a slightly raised theatre is erected, upon which the cocks fight… to the legs of which a long spur, like a long needle, is fixed, with which they know how to inflict damage." This long-lived national sport resulted in a legacy of numerous words and expressions, such as "battle royal", "cock-eyed", "pit against" and "get your spurs on".



Cockfighting – shown in this print from 1808 – was a national obsession that went hand-in-hand with gambling

GETTY IMAGES

3 Migrating to the moon

Lighthouses illuminated a bizarre aspect of bird behaviour

Many birds migrate thousands of miles to spend winter in a warmer climate. But our ancestors didn't discover this for centuries, believing instead that birds went to the moon, hibernated or changed into different species. Even when the phenomenon was better understood, it was difficult to appreciate how many species of birds were on the move – most migrated at night, when people were sleeping. However, the advent of street lamps made it easier to see migration in action. Birds are attracted to lights, and the ornithologist Henry Stevenson in Norwich noted that flocks of golden plovers were drawn to the city's gas lamps. In August 1865, during a storm, they were heard right across the city.

Lighthouses were also a magnet, and from 1879 lighthouse keepers were asked to complete questionnaires, with extraordinary results, showing that unimaginable numbers of birds passed over the seas in all directions. Another ornithologist, John Harvie-Brown, remarked: "Almost all records of birds caught or killed, or striking at the lanterns, are noted on dark or cloudy nights, with fog, haze or rain, or snow and sleet… Birds on such nights often remain around the lights all night or rest on the window-sills of the tower and balconies, or endeavour to obtain entrance to the tower." When the spell was broken at dawn, they resumed their flight.

GETTY IMAGES

4 Children's crusade

Young members of the Dicky Bird Society signed a pledge of kindness

In 1876 the editor of the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, William Adams, began to enlist children in a global campaign against cruelty to birds. Under his pen-name Uncle Toby, he founded the Dicky Bird Society (medal shown inset) to persuade children not to be cruel towards birds, but instead to feed them. On joining they signed a pledge of kindness, and their names and locations were recorded.

When the membership reached 100,000 a decade later, huge celebrations took place in Newcastle. Adams described the society's incredible growth: "Although the Dicky Bird Society was initiated in the north of England, it very soon extended to all parts of the civilised world." The first foreign branch was established in Norway on 3 February 1877, followed by another in Victoria, Australia. "Then the cause was taken up in Nova Scotia," he continued, "in New Zealand, in Tasmania, in South Africa, and in other of our distant colonies." Eventually it spread across the world, with members from Constantinople to Canada.

Honorary celebrity members were also recruited, such as Robert Louis Stevenson and Florence Nightingale. Just after the First World War, the society had more than 400,000 members, but it ceased in 1940 in the early days of the Second World War, when the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* closed. Uncle Toby made a final plea for members both young and old to "keep the pledge they took on joining the society".

5 Flying to victory

How homing pigeons helped save Allied soldiers during the First World War

Homing pigeons have an uncanny ability to return home and so were used to take messages back to their loft or coop. The arrival of the railway system enabled these birds to be easily transported, which made long-distance pigeon racing hugely popular and led to the realisation that they could fulfil a military role. At the end of the 19th century the Admiralty introduced a pigeon service, but it was scrapped in 1908. When the First World War started, Alfred Osman, founder of *The Racing Pigeon* magazine, provided pigeons for fishing trawlers that were minesweeping in the North Sea, as well as for ships and seaplanes of the Royal Naval Air Service.

During the war, pigeons that were released in emergencies flew home with messages to pigeon lofts on the east coast. In September 1917, after trying to intercept two Zeppelins, a DH 4 aircraft had to turn back to Great Yarmouth, but ditched in the sea. The accompanying flying boat landed on the water and rescued the crew but could not take off, and so their four homing pigeons were released. A successful rescue took place, and the grateful crew preserved one pigeon that had died of exhaustion. It is now in the Royal Air Force Museum, labelled "A very gallant gentleman". H

Pigeons being transported by motorbike during the First World War. The British used homing pigeons at sea and at the western front

Roy and Lesley Adkins are historians and archaeologists. Their latest book is *When There Were Birds: The Forgotten History of Our Connections* (Little, Brown, 2021). They will be appearing on our podcast soon: *historyextra.com/podcast*

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Leaders of the Ukrainian People's Republic at a rally of Ukrainian military delegates from the former Russian army, November 1917. How does the current war link to the region's history?

"This will be seen as a hybrid war, in which a key weapon is the deliberate misreading of history"

In February, following months of escalating tensions, Russia invaded Ukraine. Are parallels with the past useful in making sense of the war, or is history being used for more sinister ends? Four experts have their say

INTERVIEW BY **MATT ELTON**

ALAMY

THE PANEL

James Ellison
is reader in international history at Queen Mary University of London, specialising in the history of international affairs during and after the Cold War

Artemy Kalinovsky
is professor at Temple University, College of Liberal Arts, Philadelphia, and a specialist in the history of Russia and the Cold War

Liudmyla Sharipova
is assistant professor at the University of Nottingham, and a specialist in Ukrainian and east European history in the early modern period

Serhy Yekelchyk
is professor of history and Germanic and Slavic studies at the University of Victoria, Canada, specialising in the history of Ukraine and Russia

MORE FROM US

For more on the **historical background to the war in Ukraine,** including pieces by Serhy Yekelchyk and James Ellison, visit *historyextra.com*

Matt Elton Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February, commentators have been drawing parallels to a whole range of historical events in an attempt to make sense of the situation. How far do you think we can reasonably take those parallels?

Liudmyla Sharipova My opinion is very much divided as to how far back our analysis of today's war in Ukraine should go. I am obviously always very happy to talk about the medieval or early modern history of Ukraine and Muscovy. However, I also think we need to avoid falling into Vladimir Putin's trap when we look for the roots of the present war. [The Russian president has in recent months written and spoken about his view of history, arguing that Ukraine has never been a legitimate state but instead a natural part of Russia, and that its existence is a historical mistake dating back to at least the 1920s.] I think those roots aren't in some distant event, such as the annexation of part of Ukraine by Muscovy in the 17th century, nor in the foundation of Kyiv [in the fifth century, according to legend], but in the 20th century – and probably as recently as the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Serhy Yekelchyk I agree. I would perhaps push it even further forward, into the 21st century, by arguing that the separation of Russian and Ukrainian attitudes to the past and to democracy really happened only after the Orange Revolution of 2004–05 [a series of popular mass protests against electoral fraud that erupted in Ukraine after pro-Russia candidate Viktor Yanukovych claimed the presidential election]. When we talk about the past in this situation, we're more talking about our contemporary *images* of the past. For instance, one of the defining differences between Russia and Ukraine today is in their attitude to Stalin. When polls are conducted in Russia, he still gets very high marks as the most prominent historical leader, whereas in Ukraine he is now widely seen as a bloodthirsty tyrant.

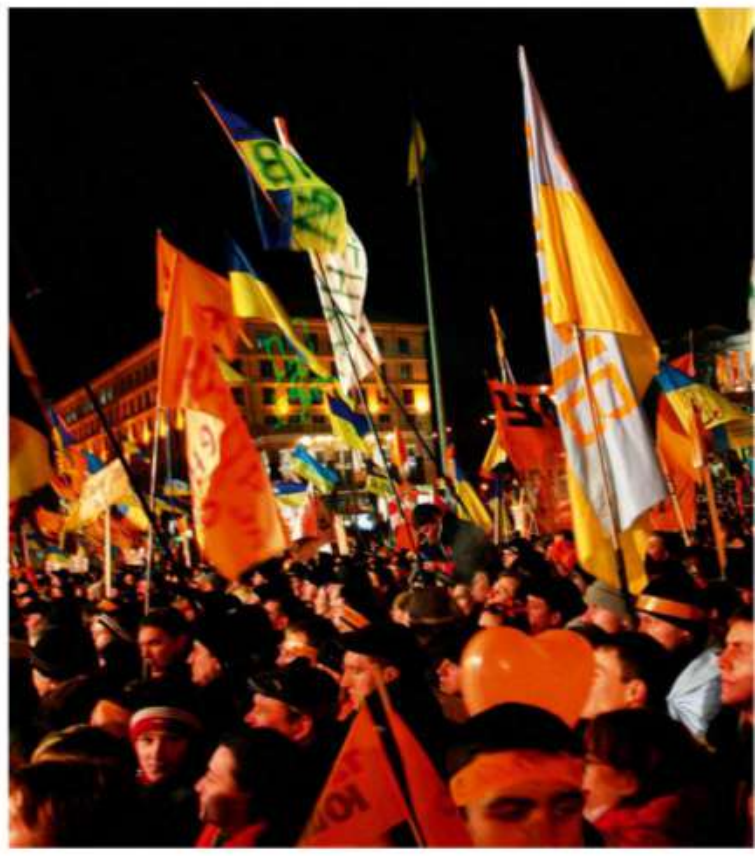
History, of course, also shows that Ukraine has long been culturally and politically involved with the west, and has acquired notions of social contracts and statehood from the west as far back as the early modern period.

Artemy Kalinovsky There are two historical factors that I think we should consider – even if we should see them more as general conditions that increased the likelihood of tensions over Ukraine's sovereignty and its place in the post-Cold War global order, rather than as direct explanations for Putin's recent actions.

The first is the attitude among Russia's political elite towards Ukraine's sovereignty after 1991 [when the nation declared independence from the Soviet Union]. The other is the issue of Crimea [the peninsula that was an autonomous republic within Ukraine from 1991 until it was annexed by Russia in 2014].

I recently came across a 1992 interview with Putin's patron and mentor, the politician Anatoly Sobchak, and was struck by the hostile way he talked about Ukraine. Sobchak was a very liberal, progressive mayor of St Petersburg [from 1991 until 1996], but he was very frustrated by the issue of Crimea. His attitudes weren't isolated, either: they reflected a scepticism among socialist post-communist reformers about Crimea being part of Ukraine, and of the idea of an independent Ukraine more generally. I think that explains something about why Russia took Crimea in 2014.

On top of all this, successive Russian regimes have interpreted the expansion of Nato in a very hostile way, and at a certain point began to fixate on Ukraine as a kind of red line. None of this explains why Putin



Protesters crowd Kyiv's Independence Square during the Orange Revolution of 2004 – when Ukrainian and Russian attitudes to democracy diverged, says Serhy Yekelchyk

Russian president Boris Yeltsin stands on a tank to address crowds in Moscow in August 1991, in defiance of an attempted coup by hardline communists. Following the failure of the coup, Ukraine declared independence and the Soviet Union collapsed

chose to invade Ukraine in February – but they are some of the conditions that contributed to that decision.

James Ellison I've been thinking about how we went from the west's hope of working with Putin in 2000 [when he became Russian president] to this year's invasion. I think that we can understand it in terms of three phases in post-Cold War history – one long-term, one medium-term and one short-term.

The first is from 1989 to 2001, when the Soviet Union collapsed and the Russian Federation was created, and its leaders – particularly Boris Yeltsin [president 1991–99] – tried to find a new relationship with the west. We can talk about the way in which Putin sees the collapse of the Soviet Union as the greatest catastrophe of the 20th century, but the reality was that both he and Yeltsin attempted to come to terms with the west. However, the Russians found western power troubling. During the Kosovo War of 1999 [which led to Nato air strikes], Yeltsin asked what right Nato had to determine international affairs.

At the same time, though, there was

ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES

"The roots of the war aren't in some distant event, but in the 20th century – and probably as recently as 1991"

LIUDMYLA SHARIPOVA

TIMELINE RUSSIA & UKRAINE: 10 KEY MOMENTS

● **1917** The Russian Revolution (below right) sparks the collapse of the Russian empire, which the new Bolshevik government begins reorganising into a socialist state. **The Ukrainian People's Republic declares independence**.

● **1921** Following a four-year conflict between the Bolsheviks and the Ukrainian People's Republic, **many of its territories are forcibly incorporated into the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic (SSR),** which becomes one of the founding members of the Soviet Union.

● **1932** An estimated 4 million people die in the **Holodomor**, a state-engineered famine designed by Soviet leader Josef Stalin to crush the spirit of Ukraine's people and prevent them from rebelling against communist rule.

● **1939** **An area that is now Western Ukraine is annexed** from Poland by the Soviet Union as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression pact made with Nazi Germany in the build-up to the Second World War.

● **1941** **Hitler invades the Soviet Union**, breaking the pact. Some Ukrainians fight alongside Soviet forces, while others – particularly in the west – see the Germans as liberators. This leads to the rise of several nationalist movements, some of whose members collaborate in the Holocaust.

● **1954** Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev **transfers the province of Crimea** from the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic to the Ukrainian SSR.

● **1991** The Soviet Union collapses following a failed coup. **Ukraine declares independence**, and the post-Soviet Russian Federation is established.

● **1999** Boris Yeltsin, Russia's president since 1991, resigns unexpectedly. **Prime minister Vladimir Putin (right) becomes acting president** and then, four months later, president.

● **2004** Pro-Russia candidate Viktor Yanukovych is declared the winner in Ukraine's presidential election, leading to accusations of electoral fraud and **a series of mass protests known as the Orange Revolution**. His rival, Viktor Yushchenko, becomes president in January 2005, leading to friction with Russia. Yanukovych is elected in 2010.

● **2014** Following years of growing tensions between Ukraine and Russia, inflamed by popular protests in Ukraine sparked by Yanukovych's refusal to push forward with links to the EU, **Russian forces annex Crimea** in March. A month later, pro-Russian separatists seize areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in the east of Ukraine.

enormous Russian support for the west at the time of the 9/11 attacks on the US, so there was a basis for future cooperation.

So what happened between 2001 and today? Well, the second, medium-term phase probably runs between that year and 2012, when the European Union-Ukraine Association Agreement [to establish closer political and economic association between those two entities] was first drafted [it became effective in 2017]. The Kremlin under Putin has come to see western expansion as occurring in two parts – once under the EU, and once under Nato – and both of those things took place in this era. A speech Putin gave to the 2007 Munich Security Conference now seems awfully predictive in retrospect, because he used it to talk about the existential fear of the use of force by the US that such expansion creates – in his view, not just in Russia but across the world.

And then, finally, American intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq [since 2001 and 2003 respectively] looked to the Kremlin like a military expansion of the kind of western hegemony that seemed to have come into force after 1991. This became particularly evident to Putin after the 2012 EU-Ukraine agreement, and the increasing talk in recent years about Ukraine gaining membership of or association with Nato. The west doesn't necessarily intend such actions to be aggressive, because the western perspective is that Nato is a defensive alliance – but, it seems to some in Russia, that Nato hasn't always acted in a defensive way.

ME I'm struck by how no one here has mentioned events in the more distant past. But is it useful to consider the way in which earlier episodes, such as the Second World War, are being used in Ukraine and Russia today?

SY I think that's right. Russian propaganda is still based on the old Soviet version of the Second World War: it's essential for the country's authorities to present any conflict by referring back to the so-called "Great Patriotic War". Except, of course, in this version the west has taken the role of the Nazis, which seems mind-boggling but is precisely what we've been seeing in Russian newspapers recently. Ukrainians are portrayed as the advanced detachment of the west, which Putin tried to use as one of his explanations for the war.

A 1945 Soviet poster celebrates victory in the Second World War. "The conflict is being used today as a propaganda tool – and not just by Russia," according to James Ellison

JE I'd argue that it's difficult to see obvious connections between the Second World War and recent events. Instead, it seems to me that the conflict is being used as a propaganda tool – and not just by Russia. The west is also using the Second World War and its geopolitical consequences, particularly in the establishment of a rules-based global order, as a means to attempt to hold Russia to account. If you listen to western leaders, including Joe Biden and, perhaps most interestingly, the German chancellor Olaf Scholz, the architecture of western alliance and the hopes of liberal order that originated in 1945 are now being defended more strongly than they have been for quite some time.

I defer to my colleagues here who know much more about the way in which Russia and Ukraine perceive Nato. But it seems to me that there is a sense, among some in that organisation, that the Russians regard Nato as a remnant of the Cold War, and as a product of the plans for the post-Second World War era. So that's probably lingering somewhere in the background of recent events, too.

LS I wanted to say something at this point about the use of terminology, particularly the use of the word "Nazis" in this context – or, to quote Putin, his purported aim to "denazify" Ukraine. I have been dismayed by the ease with which we, as historians, fall into this trap set by Putin – who, with all respect for his office, is not a historical specialist. "Nazis" are not a group that exist now, but are instead a group of individuals from the past. If we want to talk about far-rightwing people today – whether that's in Ukraine, Germany, Russia or Britain – then we should call them "neo-Nazis". We need to make sure that we're using the appropriate terminology, and I don't want to start mirroring Putin's statements.

AK Yes, the thing that strikes me about Russia's use of propaganda – other than that it's not even very clever – is that Putin is a terrible historian. He misunderstands

> **"What strikes me about Russia's use of propaganda is that Putin is a terrible historian"**
> ARTEMY KALINOVSKY

GETTY IMAGES

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky addresses US senators and representatives in March 2022. US support for Ukraine, and the defence of Europe more generally, may represent a significant change

REUTERS

one of the most important lessons of the Soviet side of the Second World War. Despite the way in which the Soviet Union deported and mistreated many of its ethnic minorities, the fact that it mobilised people from across the Soviet Union is partially what created something approaching a consolidated Soviet people after the conflict. I've been struck, during my research, by how important that identity was for people. Some had participated in the war effort, and some had fathers who had, and it was so important for them to feel "Soviet".

Ukraine, meanwhile, has now been facing an external conflict since 2014 [with the Russia-sponsored war in the Donblas region]. I've been watching the extent to which people have rallied around Volodymyr Zelensky [Ukraine's president since 2019] and other Ukrainian leaders as the conflict has progressed, and it seems to me that there's been a consolidation of a much stronger Ukrainian civic identity over the past eight years – probably partially as a result of that conflict. That's been one of Putin's great miscalculations.

> **"What unites Ukrainians today is a new, 21st-century democratic political identity"**
>
> SERHY YEKELCHYK

SY There are certainly echoes of the Second World War that Putin would *not* want to hear, too. One of those is the fact that he thinks in terms of blood and belonging, much like Hitler did. But that has been another of Putin's miscalculations: he seems to have believed that Russian-speaking Ukrainians, or Ukrainian citizens who are ethnic Russians, would embrace him just because of ethnicity, or because their shared blood and shared culture was so important.

But what unites Ukrainians – some of whom don't even speak Ukrainian or belong to that ethnic nation – is a new, 21st-century democratic political identity. And that has clashed with the strange concept emanating from the Kremlin: that ethnic belonging and linguistic politics determine everything. It's as if they're trying to drag us back into the past, back into the Second World War – the Stalinist era.

If there's another echo from those years that we need to be mindful of, it's the Soviet government's deportation of the Crimean Tatars in 1944. The region became "Russian" overnight as a result of ethnic cleansing that

Tatar people are deported from Crimea in 1944 under Soviet government orders, making that peninsula "Russian" virtually overnight

was carried out in just three days. That's not an event that is spoken about much in Russia now, but it's one of the echoes that should be very much on our minds.

ME In what other ways can Ukraine's experience of the Second World War help us understand its response to the current conflict?

LS One respect in which the Second World War can be viewed as a defining moment in contributing to the present situation is the attempt by some Ukrainians to assert Ukrainian independence during that conflict. The attempt was unrealistic, and it failed; it was also, unfortunately, conducted against a backdrop of collaboration with the Nazis. But I think the historical and national memory of that brief glimmer of hope for Ukraine as an independent nation is important for Ukrainians today – and for the way in which they're being perceived from Russia.

SY I think it's interesting that the Ukrainian state has refused to walk into the trap of engaging with Putin in direct argument about the Second World War being a defining moment. Instead, since 2015 its authorities have chosen to emphasise the true foundation of Ukrainian statehood in the 20th century: the Ukrainian revolution of 1917–21, which is precisely the moment that Russia is embarrassed to discuss because it doesn't know how to deal with the idea of revolution. Russia really loves the concept of empire, whereas the key idea for many people in Ukraine is liberation from imperial control – because that's precisely the point at which the idea of Ukraine as an ethnographic entity emerged.

> **"The memory of that brief glimmer of hope for an independent nation is important for Ukrainians today"**
>
> LIUDMYLA SHARIPOVA

ME: Why has the current situation escalated so quickly without anyone being able to stop it – or is that a misconception of what's happened?

JE It's now widely remarked upon that, since at least 1993 [when Yeltsin wrote that Poland becoming a member of Nato would break previous agreements between Nato and Russia], experts in the west have warned successive US administrations that Russia might see the enlargement of Nato and the EU as provocative. That was particularly the case if Russia didn't receive some kind of guarantee about the limits of that expansion.

Of course, for those of us who have been thinking about this subject for some time, the fact that idea is now receiving so much attention is not a surprise. Nor has it been a fringe idea: Robert Gates, US defence secretary in the administrations of presidents George W Bush and Barack Obama, wrote in his 2014 memoirs that the eastward expansion of Nato after the Second World War, in particular, was an unnecessary provocation to the Russians. Gates argued that there were other ways of thinking about securing the borders of the west on the European continent without antagonising anyone – but that, due to a major blind spot among western nations, those other possibilities weren't considered.

However, when histories of these current events are written, I'm sure there will also be other ways in which recent decisions made by western powers are understood. It's likely that another explanation will be that the focus of western powers has largely been elsewhere. Recent years have been mostly defined by a response to another major world event – the 9/11 attacks – and the pursuit of the promotion of democracy in the Middle East. It's almost as if the west thought that its policy for Europe was settled, and had been settled early after the Cold War, and that if the Russians didn't oppose it then it would simply continue. Ultimately, of course, that's proved to be a misconception. It's definitely possible to view the west's bet on diplomacy and détente with Russia as a timebomb that has only now exploded.

ME: Are there any other historical aspects, about which we haven't talked so far, that help make sense of the present situation?

SY I think the vision promoted by the elites in Russia is similar to the vision that we sometimes have in the west in one regard: that historical events are part of a "great game" between Russia and the west. What gets lost in that narrative is the agency of the people of eastern Europe. I think it's important to emphasise the fact that those people are not just figures on a chessboard – rather, they have wanted things, have been vulnerable to certain things, and have been prepared to die for other things.

AK That's a really interesting point. Over the past 30 years, Cold War historians have made so much effort to look at the agency of eastern European communist and anti-communist movements – as well as western European

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Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and US president Ronald Reagan sign the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty at the White House in 1987. The stability such treaties created has now been dismantled, argues James Ellison

states – in shaping Nato, the Warsaw Pact [the 1955 Cold War defence treaty between the Soviet Union and eastern bloc socialist republics] and so on. And yet when we talk about the post-Cold War era I think we still tend to talk only about the US and Russia, as if nobody else played a role.

I also think that there was less of a grand design for the expansion of Nato than sometimes seems to be the case – or than the Kremlin currently seems to believe. Maybe it's not a difference that matters in terms of Russia feeling encircled but I still think that it's important for historians to tease out those kinds of differences.

JE Earlier, Artemy mentioned the idea of background conditions that inform the events we're seeing right now, which is a really useful way of thinking about things. But we also need to consider the moment when Putin decided to go from increasing troop numbers on the borders of Ukraine [throughout 2021] to crossing those borders and invading. It seems to me quite significant, when we think about major geopolitical change, that Putin's invasion of Ukraine appears to undermine one of the long-term stabilising forces of the Cold War and post-Cold War periods: the fact that the US largely had a sense of what the Russians would do, and the Russians largely had a sense of what the US would do. That's gone. So when I think about how the Cold War ended and the post-Cold War era evolved, I also try to think about what might have changed to make Putin act so aggressively and cross those borders.

There are, of course, localised issues, some of which we've been discussing. But I wonder if one of the great changes was that, in 2018, President Donald Trump gave up on one of the most important pieces of legislation agreed between the Soviet Union and the US at the end of the Cold War: the 1987–88 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. For the two superpowers, that treaty acted as a means of regulating nuclear power, particularly nuclear military power, and was a tacit agreement that the use of deterrence would continue [even after tactical nuclear weapons were banned].

> **"During the Cold War, the US largely had a sense of what Russia would do, and vice versa. That's gone"**
>
> JAMES ELLISON

It's interesting that, shortly after the Trump administration announced its intention to withdraw from that treaty, Putin followed suit. So that Cold War architecture, which stabilised relations between Russia and the US, has been dismantled. That dismantling leads to instability, and I wonder if that has fed into Putin's recent actions.

Russian BMP-3 infantry fighting vehicles cluster near the Ukrainian border in January 2022. The reasons for the timing of the Russian invasion have been much debated

GETTY IMAGES/REUTERS

ME How, as historians, do you think people should view the recent events in Ukraine – and the use and misuse of history during this episode?

LS As I alluded to at the start of this conversation, I am appalled at Putin's toxic manipulations of history. In July 2021, he published an online article ["On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians", in which he argued that Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians are a single people, and essentially denied the existence of Ukraine as an independent nation]. To be honest, I think that the article is total nonsense: few people here in Britain, for instance, would seriously address the question of whether or not Scotland or Wales are "real" nations.

SY I think that article indicated something important: that Russia has a problem with its own history. Many historians specialising in eastern Europe saw [Putin's article] as a signal that Russia was an unrepentant empire that didn't even recognise the fact that it was an empire in the first place. Because Russia is unable to conceptualise itself as a modern nation state, it instead wants to rewrite the history of its neighbours. This is the central issue, and it means that a democratic Russia can only be built when the Russians come to terms with their imperial past.

I think the current conflict will be remembered as a hybrid war, in which a key weapon is the misreading of history – and not an accidental misreading, either, but an intentional misreading, trying to drag us back into the past. We must respond by pointing forwards, to a joint democratic future in which Europe will be an important player.

AK I'd like to echo the plea to not take Putin seriously as a historian. I mean, I would never take any politician very seriously in that role, but even more so in his case. What we *should* try to pay attention to is what such figures say, so that we can better understand the ways in which they manipulate the past in an attempt to mobilise people around a particular historical vision. As academic historians, part of our job is to define and explain both the past and manipulations of the past, and to make distinctions between the two.

LS Since 2014, I've been thinking that the most tragic and unfortunate aspect of all of this is the extent to which Russia considers itself a soulless entity without Ukraine. One wishes that Russia had tried to find a core of its existence within its own people, and to find a history without culturally appropriating the histories of neighbouring nations. Also, the more I look at attempts by politicians and pseudo-historians, the more I wish that history be left to its professionals, and politics be left to *its* professionals. Then, perhaps, we might finally find ourselves in a better place.

JE We're currently, and rightly, transfixed by the tragedy of Ukraine, so it's hard to make sense of the broader historical and geopolitical context. We don't quite know which particular historical jigsaw pieces fell into place to pave the way for the invasion.

It is easier, however, to think about whether recent events in Ukraine represent the start of a new era in history. We can do that by noticing what's changing and what has already changed. Although it's obviously important to be cautious, because this is a process that is still happening, I think we can identify four significant shifts.

A demonstrator in Taipei holds a picture blending the faces of Josef Stalin and Vladimir Putin, February 2022. The current conflict has sparked protests in nations around the globe

> **"Russia is unable to conceptualise itself as a modern nation state, so instead wants to rewrite the history of its neighbours"**
>
> SERHY YEKELCHYK

The first is that, since 1945 – with the exception of the conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s – there's been a general assumption that there won't be a large land war on the European continent. There have, of course, been other conflicts before 2022, some of which we have discussed. But the current war is among the most sizeable [post-1945 European conflicts], and it has certainly received the most sizeable response.

The second shift is that we are clearly seeing the return of the US to the defence of Europe on a large scale, and it may well be the case that the US has been preparing for that for a long time. The support that they're giving to the Ukrainians is a significant change.

We're also seeing a reconsolidation of the west against the current threat. Its history – especially since 1991, but even before that – has not always been one of cohesion, and there has been plenty of internal struggle. But some developments – such as Scholz's commitment to higher expenditure on defence and less dependence on Russian sources of energy – represent a distinctly new and significant historical change of extraordinary proportions. I'm not entirely sure for how long the current cohesion will continue, though: although right now nobody in the west is questioning it, the history of German rearmament and fear of German power has never entirely gone away, and will probably be resurgent at some point.

The other shift we've not talked about – for understandable reasons –is the position of China. In February, China and Russia issued a joint statement. That statement was historic in many ways, not least because of its claim that the entire world needs new leadership, thereby issuing a direct challenge to existing leaders. This development may not come to anything, largely because China still needs to trade with both the west and Russia alike, and because it prefers international stability to instability. But if the series of events we're currently in the middle of continues or escalates, we might see major historic changes.

One final point: it's yet to be seen what all of the new financial sanctions on Russia, and the new trade patterns, will do to the process of globalisation, which has more or less signified the process of global evolution since 1991 and was certainly a major force well before that. But if the levers of globalisation are thrown into reverse, particularly in terms of our reliance on energy from Russia and trade with China, then we will certainly be living in a whole new historical era. H

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Q&A

A selection of historical **conundrums** answered by experts

How common was the enslavement of Native Americans?

Mike Egan

Slavery existed in the Americas long before the arrival of Europeans. In Mesoamerica, the Aztecs enslaved sacrificial victims. On the Pacific coast of North America, between 5 and 20 per cent of the population in the Haida, Chinook and Tlingit communities were enslaved. And in the present-day US north-east, the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and other indigenous nations held war captives in a state of slavery that often ended in torture and death.

The arrival of Europeans in the Americas brought a different kind of slavery, tied to the production of commodities for markets around the world. In their thirst for profits, colonists enslaved indigenous peoples and put them to work in brutal conditions on plantations and in silver mines. The exact numbers are murky. One estimate suggests between 2.5 and 5 million Native Americans were enslaved between 1492 and 1900, but that figure includes unfree labourers whose status was not perpetual and hereditary, even if the labour itself was compulsory, unpaid and dangerous. Regardless of the specific numbers, qualitative evidence clearly shows that Europeans enslaved native peoples throughout the Americas.

While slavery levied a heavy toll on indigenous communities, the organisation and operation of the trade in native peoples never resembled the trans-Atlantic slave trade that carried 10 million Africans into slavery. That trade relied on international financing; on European factories that produced goods designed for African markets; on mercantile firms that specialised in trans-Atlantic commerce; and on dedicated barracoons (barracks for enslaved people) and prisons on both sides of the Atlantic.

Claudio Saunt, historian and author of *Unworthy Republic* (Norton, 2020)

A slave hunter at work in the Americas, in a painting by the French artist Jean-Baptiste Debret. It has been estimated that up to 5 million Native Americans were enslaved from 1492–1900

Prince Albert Victor, son of King Edward VII, in c1892. At the start of that decade he was created Duke of Clarence and Avondale

What happened to the Duchy of Clarence?

Stella Bond

The Dukedom of Clarence is a vacant title traditionally created for junior members of the English, later British, royal family. It's had a chequered history, to say the least.

Three dukes were created between 1362 and 1461, each of whom met untimely ends. The first holder, Lionel of Antwerp, son of Edward III, died in Italy in 1368, rumoured to have been poisoned by his father-in-law. The next Duke of Clarence, a son of Henry IV named Thomas of Lancaster, was slain during the battle of Baugé in France in 1421. Forty years later, George Plantagenet was created the new duke, but would prove a less than loyal sibling to his king, Edward IV – he was executed for treason aged just 28, allegedly drowned in a butt of Malmsey wine.

The luckless Clarence name was revived just twice more. In 1789 the future William IV was created Duke of Clarence and St Andrews, dying without a legitimate heir; and in 1890 Prince Albert Victor was made the new Duke of Clarence and Avondale. Albert Victor was connected to several large scandals during and after his life, such as the spurious allegation that he was Jack the Ripper. The Clarence name, ill-fated as it was, has not been used since.

Nathen Amin, author of *Henry VII and the Tudor Pretenders* (Amberley, 2021)

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What was the glass delusion?

The medical textbooks of the Middle Ages and Renaissance record numerous strange cases of patients who believed they were made of substances other than human flesh, such as pottery or butter. However, perhaps the most famous – and the strangest of all – was the glass delusion.

One such story is recorded in the casebooks of the French royal physician André du Laurens (1558–1609), of "a great Lord, which thought himself to be glass". In every other respect the lord was quite rational and enjoyed the company of his friends, "but so as that he would desire them, that they would not come near unto him". Other patients believed that they had a glass bottom and could not sit down; one became convinced that his chest was transparent and others could see straight into him. Perhaps the most famous sufferer was Charles VI of France (1368–1422). The king refused to let anyone come near him or touch him, and wore specially reinforced clothing so that his fragile body would not crack.

We might link the glass delusion to fear of assassination or contagious disease. For medieval and Renaissance physicians, the glass delusion exposed the profound correspondence between our inner dispositions and the world around us. It was seen as a symptom of melancholy, the disease of body and mind arising from an excess of the cold and dry humour, black bile. Du Laurens thought that the dry qualities of melancholy imprinted themselves on the sufferer's imagination: looking at a brittle, fragile glass could lead to someone not just identifying with it, but believing that they are glass themselves.

Mary Ann Lund, author of *A User's Guide to Melancholy* (Cambridge University Press, 2021)

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Rossa Richter, known as "Zazel", perches on top of a cannon, 1877. She was the first human cannonball

DID YOU KNOW...?

Making an ass of himself

In 1938, a mule was elected a Republican committeeman to represent the small American town of Milton, Washington at county level. The animal, named Boston Curtis, was nominated by the Democratic mayor. He expected his prank, which involved getting Boston to "sign" his nomination form with his hoofprint, would be easily detected. However, there were no other candidates, and 51 people voted for Boston Curtis, without enquiring too closely into his qualifications for the post, so the mule was duly elected.

Sporting scandal

A former Wimbledon men's finalist died on Devil's Island, the notorious French penal colony, where he was serving a life sentence for murder. Irish-born Vere St. Leger Goold was the loser in the 1879 final. After retiring from tennis, his life was haunted by drink, drugs and debt. In 1907, he and his French wife were convicted of murdering a woman in Monte Carlo for her cash and jewels. Sent to Devil's Island, Goold killed himself soon after arriving there.

Shot to fame

The first human cannonball was a teenage girl. She was shot out of a cannon in front of a large, appreciative audience at London's Royal Aquarium, an entertainment complex in Westminster, which stood where Central Hall Westminster now does. Rossa Richter, known as "Zazel", was, in the words of a contemporary journalist, "hurled... from the jaws of death into the arms of fame" in April 1877. She continued to perform her act until serious injury forced her into retirement in 1891. H

Nick Rennison, writer and journalist specialising in history

A cruel Ren

"Wicked, an abomination, and against all humanity." These words, uttered in 1416, shine a light on a dark truth: that slavery thrived in Renaissance Europe. **HANNAH SKODA** tells the stories of people living in bondage in a period when ideals of liberty and the nobility of human nature didn't apply to all

Slave status symbols
A painting of Lisbon depicts conspicuous displays of Portuguese imperial wealth and power – including enslaved African people

aissance

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"I gave and sold myself, of my own free will, as a slave to Elias, son of Blasius of Rastus, for four and a half gold coins, valid until my death, so that the said Elias can do with me as he pleases." This record of an exchange – noted on a slip of parchment as having taken place in Dubrovnik in 1281 – is a typical sale contract, reminding us that slavery was a common phenomenon across the Mediterranean and southern Europe in the late medieval period. It makes the horrors of slavery very clear – yet it is also striking to see the *I* of the enslaved person. Despite becoming "property", their voice resonates across the centuries.

We rightly celebrate the achievements of the Renaissance but in the late medieval period the Mediterranean was effectively a slaving zone, with enslaved people transported between all of its coasts and sold in its cities, both Muslim and Christian.

Those slaves who worked in the households of even prominent humanists tend to get written out of accounts of the Renaissance. Here, however, I will tell some of the stories of slaves sold in southern Europe. From Dubrovnik in modern-day Croatia around the coast of Italy, the south of France and the coast of Spain up to Porto in Portugal, the archives are full of notarial (legal) contracts about slave sales. In 1367, a woman named Christine was sold in Marseille; the purchaser told that he could "have her, hold her, give her, sell her, exchange her, and do all that he pleases with her".

BRIDGEMAN

Moment of truth
A couple bring an enslaved person before a magistrate so that she can gain her liberty, as depicted in an Italian manuscript from the 13th century. Some slaves bought their own freedom by saving up their meagre earnings

Black period

The Italian city of Genoa played a key role in the story of slavery in this period. Genoese merchants took control of the Black Sea port of Caffa (modern-day Feodosia, eastern Crimea) in the late 13th century, and they used it as a slaving hub. They were soon joined by merchants from many other cities. Enslaved people from a range of regions – Russians, Tatars, Bulgarians, Turks, Greeks, Albanians – were sold via Black Sea ports then transported to southern Europe. From 1415, Portuguese expeditions to the west coast of Africa brought more African slaves to be traded. And this story needs to be accompanied by the criss-crossing trade of slaves between north Africa and Europe across the period.

In Barcelona, 20 per cent of households had slaves. And in Genoa, it's thought that female slaves may have made up as much as 10 per cent of their age group. This was not an insignificant phenomenon, in other words. Certain features stand out: the majority of slaves (though by no means all) in this period were female and young, at least at the point of purchase. And the majority – again, by no means all – of enslaved people, in cities as diverse as Venice, Perpignan and Barcelona, were put to domestic work.

> A woman from Marseille sold her slave – but kept the enslaved woman's one-year-old son for herself

This was a period in Italy in which ideas of liberty, the nobility of human nature, and the importance of the common good were discussed in inspirational terms by Renaissance humanists. But these were also societies reliant on human trafficking and slavery.

The hypocrisy is striking, and did not entirely escape contemporaries. The city of Dubrovnik banned slave trading in 1416 as "disgraceful, wicked, an abomination, and against all humanity". It did not ban slave-owning, however, and traders found loopholes. Alfonso X, king of Castile from 1252–84, passed a code of law known as the *Siete Partidas*, which expressed disgust at the practice of slave trading. Yet this was also a region in which slaving practices were embedded in social structures.

Most important, though, are the experiences of the enslaved people themselves. We have thousands of contracts of slave sales, as well as documentation from litigation either when owners and traders quibbled, or when enslaved people attempted to challenge their circumstances. These slaves dealt with their situations with courage and acuity, and it's vital that we listen to their voices, rather than the disingenuous attempts by those who made their money from them to grapple with their consciences.

Turn the page to discover their stories…

ALAMY/PUBLIC DOMAIN

Casting their net Genoa shown in a 15th-century woodcut. Merchants from this Italian port-city were at the centre of a trade that enslaved people from Russia to west Africa

Cutting the chains An illumination from a Spanish Bible showing the liberation of slaves. Some slaveholders freed their "property" as a show of Christian charity

Tales of the enslaved:
The human stories behind the medieval slave trade

1 The slave who sold her sister
Exchanging family for freedom

We begin with the story of an enslaved woman from Dubrovnik, known in the Middle Ages as Ragusa. At that time, the city had a high proportion of slaves, some of whom were traded abroad – particularly via Venice, since Dubrovnik was part of the Venetian empire – and some of whom served in Ragusan households.

A slave named Dabraça de Bosna appears in the records in 1282. We can guess that she had been captured in a raid on the hinterlands around Dubrovnik, because her name gives a clue to her origins. And in 1282, de Bosna was able to buy her freedom.

Such contracts are not unusual. Through a process known as manumission, many slaves did become free – though the records rarely tell us what happened to them subsequently. Enslaved people in the period had two routes to freedom. The first was if a master or mistress chose to set free a slave; some owners did so as an act of Christian charity – though more cynical observers pointed out that elderly slaves were hardly worth the upkeep anyway. Some owners also freed slaves in their wills, again in a bid to earn spiritual credit.

The second route was for enslaved people to save up their meagre earnings and buy their freedom. Although slaves were themselves considered in law to be property, a principle of Roman law known as the *peculium* allowed for them to be paid a pittance that they could save as their own money. Many used such funds to purchase themselves. The fact that there were potential routes to freedom does not undermine the sheer horror of slavery, but it does show us the ways in which enslaved people tried to manage their own situations.

De Bosna, however, had not saved up enough to purchase her own freedom, so instead sold her sister. At that point, according to the manumission document, de Bosna became free to "wander through the four corners of the Earth, wherever it should please her, free and liberated for ever". In return, her sister was given to the master to "serve her owner in all ways according to his wishes", a particularly ominous phrase. But there was a catch: the sister was sold for only four years, after which she was free to go.

One wonders about the two siblings' relationship: was this a case of betrayal, or a powerful emotive bond driving these sisters to support one another even in these terrible circumstances? Either way, de Bosna's management of her own fate is striking.

2 The young mothers who fought back
Protecting children born into slavery

Family bonds are evident in so many of these stories. Enslaved people were brutally taken from their homes and severed from their local communities. Yet they still found ways to maintain a sense of family.

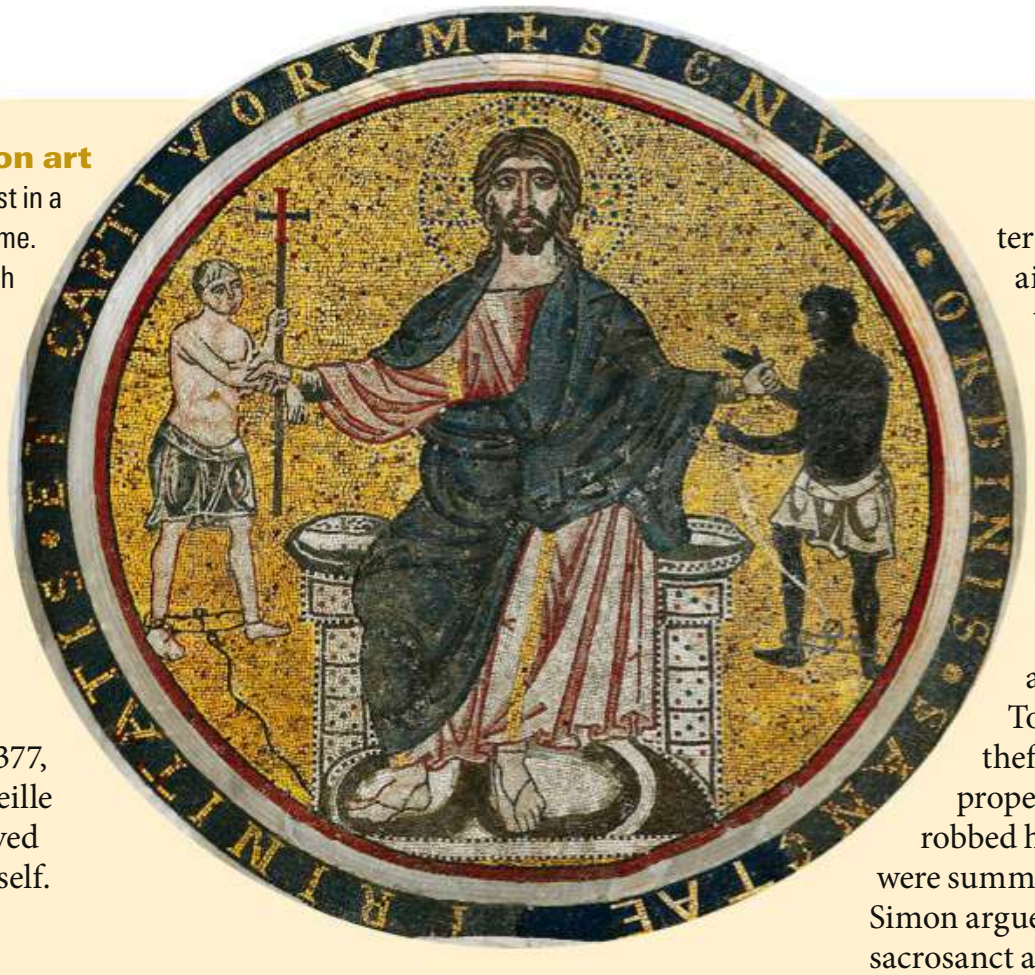
The domestic slavery of women often included a sexual element, and many enslaved women became pregnant by their masters. In medieval Roman law, canon law (the law of the church) and civic statutes, the offspring of slaves were supposed to inherit the unfree status of their mothers. Thus a Marseillais noble named Pascal de Galdis was able to buy a pregnant slave and her four-year-old son, in 1465, and then sell the child three years later.

Some enslaved women found ways to contest this cruelty. One was Theodora, who lived in Crete and had two sons – Dimitrios and Andronicos – by her owner, Pietro Porco. In 1345, Porco decided that he wanted to sell the boys; he claimed this was his legal right, because they had inherited the enslaved status of their mother. However, the magistrates of Crete – which at the time was a Venetian colony known as the kingdom of Candia – forbade the sale, noting that "[the children] are and will remain forever free".

Another woman living in Crete, a free sex-worker named Maria, was told that she would have to give up her child because the father was a slave. But Maria managed to use the law to her advantage, taking the case to court to argue that the child should inherit her free status. She won her case.

BRIDGEMAN

Free state A 17th-century illustration of Crete, at the time a Venetian colony known as the kingdom of Candia. In the late Middle Ages, law courts in such places dealt with thorny questions such as whether the children of enslaved women should automatically be born into slavery



Emancipation art
Two freed slaves flank Christ in a 13th-century mosaic in Rome. "Christian canon law grappled with the ethics of enslaving Christians," says Hannah Skoda

AKG-IMAGES

This legal and social ambivalence, and stories of mothers standing up for their children, can be found in various Italian cities. But they are tempered by the heart-rending tales of children who were separated from their mothers at a young age. In 1377, for instance, a woman from Marseille sold her slave – but kept the enslaved woman's one-year-old son for herself.

3 The "heretics" who won their freedom

Exploiting Christian hypocrisies

These are stories of slaves who knew how to use the law. Extraordinarily, they were able to litigate, and the complexity of legal and cultural attitudes occasionally worked in their favour. Sometimes, enslaved people were able to exploit the hypocrisies at the heart of Christian society. A trio of teenage girls – Grlica, Stojana and Tvrdislava – who were enslaved in Bosnia in 1393 provide one such extraordinary story.

According to the slave trader, the three teenagers were *patarenes* – members of a heretical sect in Bosnia. This was an important distinction, because the canon law of the Catholic church grappled with the ethics of enslaving other Christians.

Many slaves converted to Christianity during the late Middle Ages, presenting the church authorities with a problem. They did not want enslaved people to become free by converting, because they worried that owners might then be discouraged from allowing their slaves to convert.

But the church had also decided that enslaving Christians was wrong. So canon law alighted on a compromise, decreeing that the moment of conversion was crucial. If a slave had converted *before* they were enslaved, the enslavement was invalidated. If, however, they converted *after* they'd been enslaved, there was apparently no problem.

So how did all this apply to Grlica, Stojana and Tvrdislava? These three girls found the remarkable strength to state publicly that they had converted to Christianity *before* being enslaved. Extraordinarily, they won their case, and the trader was forced to release them – much to his fury.

4 The slave who escaped to victory

Finding freedom in a new home

Some of these stories are, on the face of it, uplifting – but enslaved people worked so hard to contest their situations precisely because slavery was so horrific. This point is made most powerfully by the stories of slaves who attempted to escape. Enslaved people who tried to flee were usually captured and punished; this process generated documentation, so we know something of their stories.

One such case is that of Antoine Simon, a black slave who worked in Barcelona in the 1440s. Escaping from his owner, a prominent trader named Pons Ferrer, Antoine crossed the Pyrenees – a journey that must have been terrifying. Somehow he knew to aim for the town of Pamiers, in the south of France, where slavery was against the law. There Simon found employment with one Pierre Toc, who worked for the region's count.

Ferrer was furious, and pursued Simon to Pamiers. Upon arrival, he took legal action against both Simon and Toc, accusing the former of theft: since Simon was Ferrer's property, Simon had, in effect, robbed himself from Ferrer. Both men were summoned before the court, where Simon argued that his freedom was sacrosanct according to the law of his new home. Toc reiterated that argument, and stressed his right to employ Simon as a free man.

What clinched the outcome, however, was the determination of the town's officials to stress their own independence: it was part of their civic identity to defend the liberty of Pamier's inhabitants. Simon lived the rest of his life a free man.

Most enslaved people, of course, never managed to escape, and draconian punishments were imposed on those who tried. But Simon's story is testament to the possibility, and to his understanding of how he might secure his freedom.

His story is also testament to Pamier's determination to protect its inhabitants' freedom. Many urban centres adopted similar policies: notably, Toulouse welcomed a number of fugitives from slavery, and some other towns where slavery remained common nevertheless expressed anxiety about the morality of the practice.

However, in many respects the groundwork was laid in this period for the development of Atlantic slavery in subsequent centuries. The religious justifications were in place, and the economic advantages and legal frameworks for rendering humans as property were set out, even if slavery in the late medieval period was not yet fully racialised.

Despite this, enslaved people like Simon remained irreducibly human: courageous, canny and determined – ironically, the very qualities articulated by the Renaissance humanists we continue to celebrate today. H

Many slaves converted to Christianity during the late Middle Ages, presenting the church authorities with a problem

Hannah Skoda is a fellow in medieval history at the University of Oxford. Her books include *Medieval Violence* (OUP, 2013)

Victoria Drummond
Engineering trailblazer

A century ago, the barriers facing any woman longing for a career in marine engineering seemed almost insurmountable – but not quite. **JO STANLEY** introduces a woman who had the talent, bravery and determination to make her mark in the male-dominated maritime world

One day in October 1952, an old seafarer watched warily as a uniformed woman approached his ship at Avonmouth docks, on the Somerset coast near Bristol.

"Odd – must be a district nurse," he mused, observing the older woman preparing to board. Or maybe she was collecting alms for a seafarers' charity?

As she drew closer, he recognised the purple-and-gold epaulettes – could that middle-aged lady really be their new second engineer? The ship had been waiting for this crucial team member – but a senior marine engineer who was also a woman: how could that be?

The men serving on the obscure little tramp steamer SS *Markab* were about to encounter a 58-year-old living legend: Victoria Drummond – Queen Victoria's god-daughter, a war hero with an MBE, and one of the most path-breaking women in seafaring and engineering history. The world's first female seagoing ship's engineer had overcome seemingly impossible odds to reach this position. And she did it all calmly, determinedly, and by dint of her ability, not patronage. Throughout her 30-year fight for the chance to work on ships' engines, she'd been confident in her competence. She took it for granted that gender shouldn't determine what people were allowed to do. *She* felt normal.

Born in 1894 at Megginch Castle, her ancestral home near Perth, by her teens Drummond had already developed a fancy for an oily career in the bowels of ships. Her determination was buoyed by both history and family, preceded as she was by many formidable and talented female forebears who had followed "outlandish" paths. As her wood-worker grandmother contentedly observed: "That child… might even make an engineer."

> "Drummond took the chief engineer exam no fewer than 31 times. One of the examiners admitted that she was failed simply because she was a woman"

Equally fortunately, because of the demand for labour sparked by the First World War, women were allowed to undertake work outside the traditionally female sphere. For example, Eily Keary helped design aspects of seaplanes and flying boats. Other women built ships. And in 1915, Drummond's father gave her the green light.

"Papa gave me a paint box and two Parisian sparkly shoe buckles," she recalled, "[and] said: 'Now you are 21, you can choose your own career.' 'I'm going to be a marine engineer,' I said, but I don't think he took me seriously."

It must have been a common sentiment among men. During the First World War, fewer than 100 women worked among the 100,000 men serving in the merchant navy. Despite the long odds, though, in 1916 Drummond donned overalls and began working her way up in engineering, starting ashore. "Mummy got me an introduction to the manager of the Caledon Ship Works in Dundee," she recalled. And quickly, "my fellow workmates… got used to the idea of having a woman working with them".

During this period, doors began to open more widely. In 1919, Drummond was welcomed into the newly formed Women's Engineering Society, and two years later she became the first ever "lady member" of the Institute of Marine Engineers (today the Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology, or IMarEST).

At last, in 1922, Drummond started work at sea, joining the Blue Funnel Line SS *Anchises* as 10th engineer – the lowest such rank aboard – for successive voyages to Australia. She loved her travels: savouring snow on orange trees growing on the flanks of Mount Etna, Sicily; enjoying elaborate hospitality from distant *distingué* relatives; gathering wild flowers in remote groves; gazing at moonlit seascapes; visiting Gibraltar, "just like the picture I had drawn… from imagination".

Sexism at sea

Drummond's career was dealt a blow when Blue Funnel Line, fearing a scandal, raised concerns about her closeness with the (married) second engineer on the *Anchises*; similar problems still face seawomen today when male shipmates mistake matey-ness for lust. "I could have told them it was not like that, but they wouldn't listen," she said.

Forced to change companies, she joined British India Line's TSS *Mulbera* as fifth engineer for a journey to east Africa. After three years on the *Mulbera*, though, the second engineer's seemingly pathological hostility drove her out of that company, too.

The following 12 years spent on dry land were hard

ILLUSTRATION BY **RACHEL DICKENS**

Our collage includes Drummond's ancestral home, Megginch Castle; a Second World War Allied convoy; a scene of Mount Etna, which Drummond encountered on one voyage; and a Lloyd's War Medal for Bravery at Sea, similar to the one that Drummond received in 1941

RMG/MEGGINCH CASTLE/CRAIG CAMERON/DREAMSTIME

for Drummond. She started Golden Fisheries, a small business importing tropical fish, and "tried to mend cars". But not only could she not find work, she couldn't advance in her chosen career, either; the route to becoming chief engineer seemed to be blocked to her.

It certainly wasn't for want of trying. Drummond took the chief engineer exam 31 times. Her tutor at Dundee Technical College was an ally, she recalled – "It even became quite a joke between us" – but jokes mask pain.

In 1936, one of the examiners admitted to the tutor that Drummond was being failed simply because she was a woman. The stonewalling of female mariners by the Board of Trade had long been a shameful habit. To mask this unfairness, the board failed not just Drummond but all of the other candidates sitting the batches of exams she took.

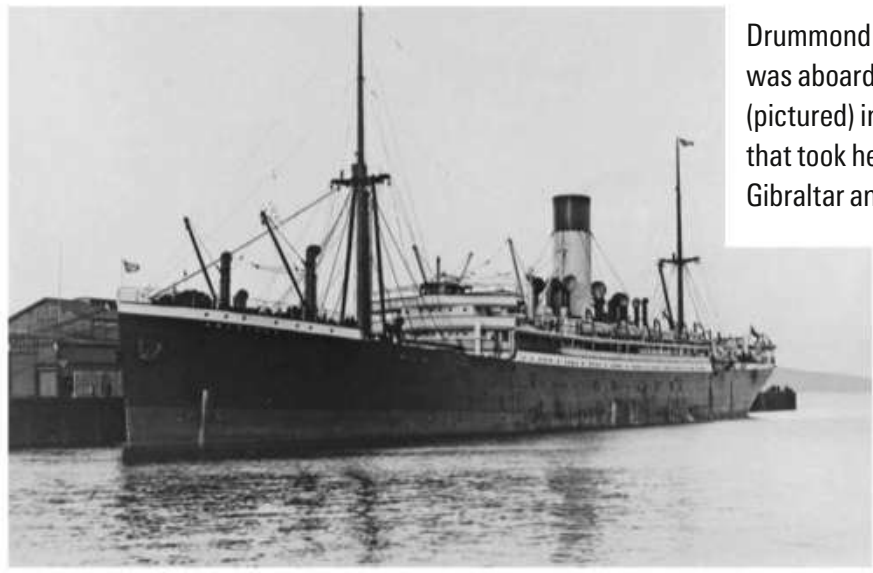
The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 would surely see Drummond back at sea – or so you'd imagine. "It was time for me to get back on a ship," she recalled, but still "no one would have me. They might be short-staffed but that was no reason to employ a woman engineer. And certainly not in wartime."

Eventually she found work – but on foreign-flagged ships, just as Canadian women gained positions as radio officers on Scandinavian ships to sidestep their homeland's sexist rebuttals. And she proved her mettle. In 1940, she was sailing aboard her second ship, the *Bonita*, from Fowey in Cornwall to Norfolk, Virginia, when Luftwaffe planes attacked 400 miles out into the Atlantic. Bombs split the main water-service pipe feeding the boilers. Displaying huge bravery, Drummond staunched the leak alone, and managed to boost the ship's speed by more than 25 per cent. As a result, the *Bonita* was able to dodge the 25 bombs that were aimed at it over the next half-hour.

Her courage finally brought recognition: in 1941, Drummond was awarded both an MBE and a Lloyd's War Medal for Bravery at Sea. By this point she had gained a

Drummond with the second and third engineers on the SS *Elsie Beth*, which took her near Archangel in the Arctic Circle in 1949. "My fellow workmates [quickly] got used to the idea of having a woman working with them"

Drummond, seated, prepares for action on HMS *Chrysanthemum* in 1942. By then, a brave feat of engineering on a transatlantic ship had garnered her an MBE – but not a job as chief engineer



Drummond's first job at sea was aboard the *Anchises* (pictured) in 1922, a posting that took her to Sicily, Gibraltar and Australia

Panamanian qualification as a chief engineer. "Nobody seemed to want me… [but] I was immensely proud of both my medals. They reassured me that at least someone believed my work was worthwhile."

What's more, this tall, red-headed woman didn't try to present herself as some kind of honorary male in order to get a "man's job". To grasp this point, you'd need only take a quick look at her luggage, which typically included her sewing gear and a supply of henna shampoo to mask the grey in her hair. Indeed, while serving aboard the *Karabagh* in May 1944, she sought to reduce stress with the help of her needles. "While waiting off Cowes for the [D-Day] invasion to begin I started to do an embroidery map of the world," she recalled.

When the war was over, Drummond was able to find only lowly work on tramp ships (vessels that didn't ply regular routes with fixed ports of call). Liners were "girling up", with ex-Wrens working as pursers, but on cargo ships Drummond would still be the only woman aboard. Now aged 51, she felt "tired of sailing on small dirty boats with often disagreeable chiefs". Still, that was the life.

> "This tall, red-headed woman didn't try to present herself as some kind of honorary male to get a 'man's job'"

So it was that in 1952 in Avonmouth she joined the SS *Markab* as second engineer; and she later served on a tanker and other smaller vessels. Finally, at the end of her career, in 1958 she was accepted as a chief engineer. Her seagoing life finished in 1962 – after nearly 40 years and no fewer than 49 voyages.

The year before the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act was passed, Drummond was moved into a care home. By then officer shortages were forcing shipping companies to recruit women as engineering officers. But Drummond was by then largely forgotten, and was sadly no longer on hand to provide inspiration to those groundbreaking female engineers. She died in 1978, with a picture of a ship that she'd embroidered herself nearby.

It was only after her death that Drummond's achievements became properly recognised. Now, with the quest for female role models in science, technology, engineering and maths building up steam, she is acclaimed as a true trailblazer. The engineering block at Solent University was named after her, as is a room at the headquarters of IMarEST, the professional society to which she belonged.

Today, some 9 per cent of IMarEST members are women. Would Drummond have applauded this as progress? My bet is that she'd be cheerleading for all good engineers – never mind their gender. H

Jo Stanley (University of Hull) is an expert on diverse seafarers and the author of books including *From Cabin 'Boys' to Captains: 250 Years of Women at Sea* (The History Press, 2016).
You can read her blog at *genderedseas.blogspot.com*

MEGGINCH CASTLE/IWM A7842A

Dream scenario An installation by the sculptor Anish Kapoor, who, alongside fellow Briton Damien Hirst, are two of the richest artists on Earth. "No longer the workshop of the world, we have become instead one of the great factories of humanity's dreams," writes James Hawes

How Britain became a cultural colossus

The secret to the nation's status as a creative superpower lies not in stability and peace but a past dominated by invasion, disruption and war

BY **JAMES HAWES**

Accompanies the eight-part BBC Two series **Art That Made Us**

BBC TWO

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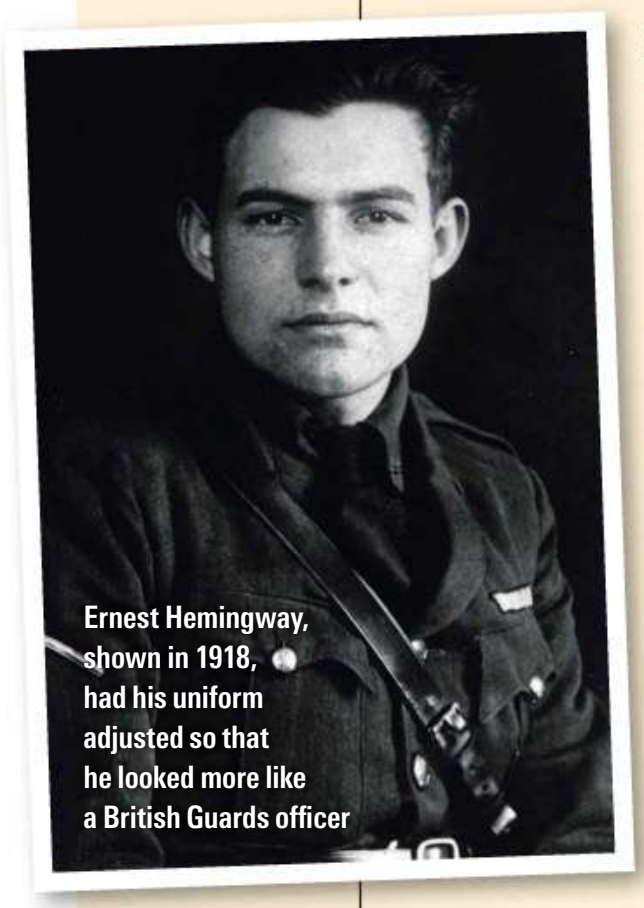
Just over a century ago, people across the globe had an obvious reason to be interested in the books we on these islands wrote, the pictures we painted, the buildings we built, the clothes we wore and the whole unique (sometimes, to others, rather strange) way we thought and did things. After all, one way or another, we ruled over almost a quarter of humanity.



Ernest Hemingway, shown in 1918, had his uniform adjusted so that he looked more like a British Guards officer

Even the mighty Americans still copied us: during the First World War, Ernest Hemingway got his tailor to subtly tweak his uniform so that he looked more like one of our Guards officers; F Scott Fitzgerald's immortal anti-hero from 1925, Jay Gatsby, tries vainly to make his mysterious New Money socially acceptable by speaking in a bizarrely "British" way.

Well, all that's gone. Most of Ireland left us in 1922, and the landslide of the empire came swiftly after the Second World War. We now rule nobody but ourselves, and even who exactly *we* are is up for grabs (will we Scots and English call ourselves *us* for much longer?).

Imagine if you were a Martian, looking down at the world today and knowing that Earth's nations all have different cultures. You might assume that what went on among creative folk on this medium-sized set of islands off the north-west coast of Europe would be no more interesting to peoples across the rest of the world than what writers, artists, architects and suchlike were up to in, say, France or Spain.

You would be wrong. Empire or not, British creativity has an enormous reach. Our diplomats see it as a vital part of our soft power in the world – our ability to influence people – but there's nothing soft at all about it when it comes to our economic well-being. The creative industries today contribute almost £13m to the UK economy every hour, which is more than all the cars we make, the planes we build, the oil and gas we extract and the Life Sciences we do, all put together – and they are growing faster.

"Empire or not, British creativity has an enormous reach. Our diplomats see it as a vital part of our soft power in the world

We are in danger of forgetting just how extraordinary this is. Compare Britain to Germany, which is easily the wealthiest and most politically influential country in Europe, and has been for decades. West Germany overtook us as the world's second-greatest car manufacturer by 1960, and hasn't looked back. The words "Made in Germany" are known across the world as a mark of excellence in industrial design and quality. Germany also has a mighty cultural heritage (Bach! Beethoven! Wagner!). Our imaginary Martian might, therefore, assume that German film, TV, art, architecture and literature are likewise avidly consumed the world over. The reality is very different. In terms of global impact, German writers, sculptors and filmmakers are consistently outshone by their British counterparts.

Among the richest artists on Earth are Damien Hirst and Anish Kapoor, while two of the richest musicians are Paul McCartney and Andrew Lloyd-Webber. JK Rowling's *Harry Potter* saga is the greatest book/film success in history. In 2020 and 2021, the world's highest-grossing musical tours were Elton John and the Rolling Stones. Our fictional Martian anthropologist would surely want to know why such a small place, home to less than 1 per cent of humanity, packs a cultural punch so very far above its weight.

The more you think about this, the stranger it is. Economic success isn't, it seems, enough to give you cultural reach – and relative economic decline isn't enough to make your culture unimportant in the world.

The American diplomat Dean Acheson famously said that we British had lost an empire but failed to find a role. In fact, we seem to have found it: no longer the workshop of the world, we have become instead one of the great factories of humanity's dreams.

What, then, is the secret of this creative DNA, the heart of an industry which is growing more and more vital to our national prosperity? Of course, some people will say that it's no secret. Surely, our worldwide cultural success depends on America being English-speaking as well?

Well, yes – and no. Certainly, we benefit from the very unusual historical fact that when one country lost its mantle as the leading power in the world, that role was taken over by another country with the same language. As a result of this fluke, and of the world wide web, English is by a mile the world's biggest second-language, and this undoubtedly helps us by making our cultural production accessible across the globe.

But that doesn't mean it's merely a branch of America-

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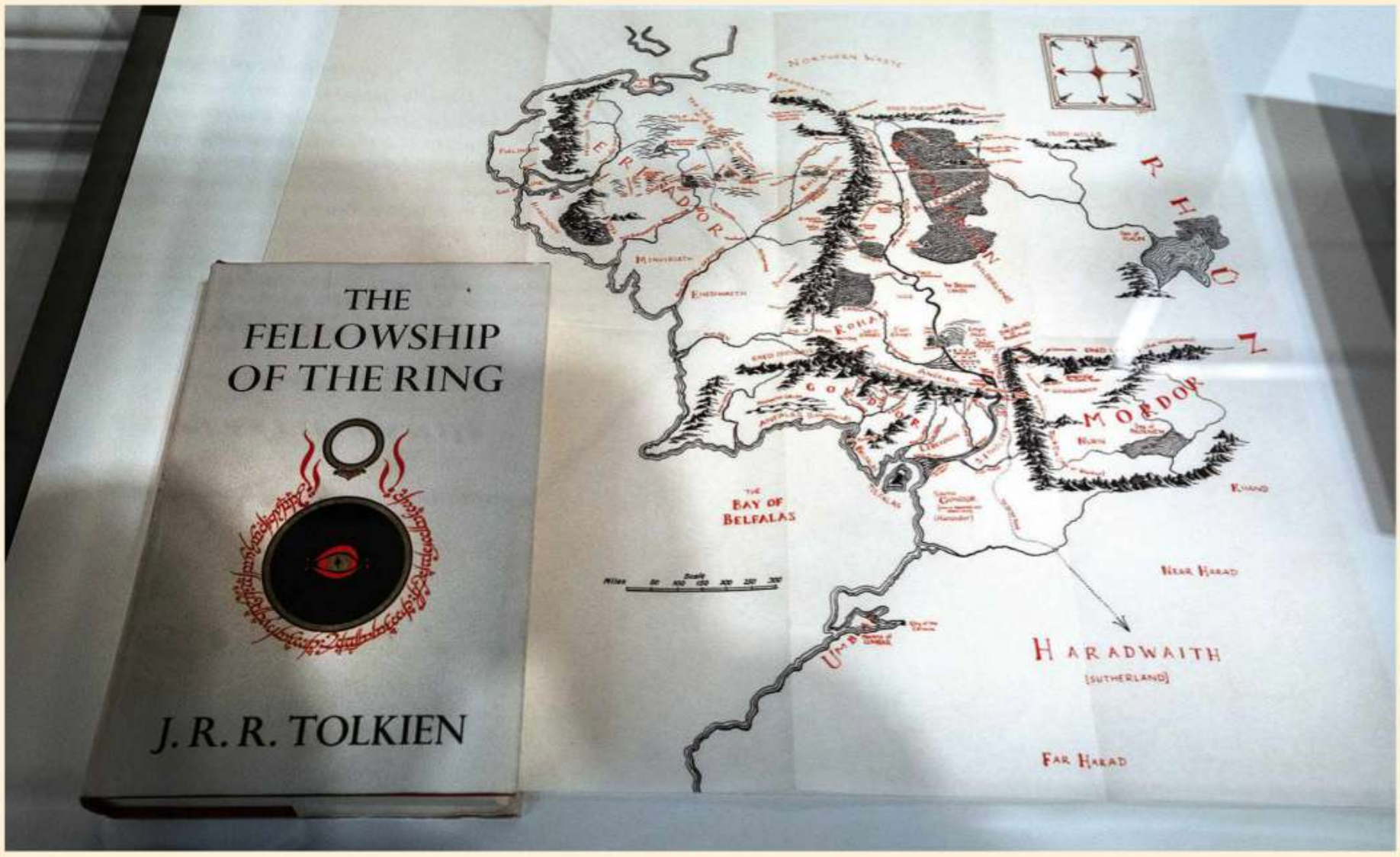
Rock and roll circus
Mick Jagger and Keith Richards on stage in 1982. For almost 60 years, the Rolling Stones have helped make Britain a dominant force in rock music, putting on the world's highest-grossing musical tour of 2021

Production lines
Beetles at a Volkswagen plant, c1950. West Germany's car production would soon outstrip that of Britain, but in the cultural arena it was an entirely different story



Rose-tinted tales

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: A map of Middle Earth alongside the first instalment of JRR Tolkien's extraordinarily influential *Lord of the Rings* trilogy; Daniel Craig plays James Bond alongside Judi Dench's M in *Skyfall* (2012); *Harry Potter* author, JK Rowling, pictured in 2010. All three narratives speak to the British fascination with defending what the nation cherishes in its history

ALAMY/REX FEATURES/GETTY IMAGES

na. On the contrary, what we offer is very unlike what America offers, and it's successful precisely because of that difference. As the British rapper Stormzy puts it: "The Americans have their way of talking, their way of dressing, their way of doing things, and we have ours."

Look at Hollywood's home-grown stories. They are obsessed with the idea of a Second Chance for their heroes. Indeed, it sometimes feels as though almost every story dreamed up in Hollywood is about re-inventing yourself and escaping your past by digging deep into your own, personal depths (and so on). The ever-repeated vision is that in the psychologically unlimited spaces of the New World, the brave and the bold can always re-make their own futures.

Now look at the British stories that have swept the world over the past few decades: *The Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter*, *His Dark Materials*, even the ageless *James Bond*. There, we find something different, which is precisely why Hollywood throws money at it: here is something that America just can't offer the world.

Our dreams are not about overcoming the past so that we, as freshly re-made individuals, can head across the frontiers of a bright, unknown new future. Quite the opposite. For all the differences between them, they seem linked by a deep, subterranean cord which evokes desperate battles to defend ancient, shared redoubts.

This innate sense that things need to be defended amid a maelstrom of change seems to suffuse everything we do, even if we are not always fully aware of it ourselves. The late Lord Richard Rogers, who spearheaded today's extraordinary worldwide reputation of British architecture, is counted by most as a Modernist, yet as early as his Reith Lecture of 1995 it was clear that his vision of a new world was, in fact, based on the idea that we needed to save things that were fast going lost, if not almost gone already: "We are witnessing the destruction of the very idea of the city. The emphasis is now on selfishness and separation rather than on contact and community."

It is this unique cultural reflex of a battle to preserve, for the future, what is of real value in the past, which makes us *us* – something totally different to the Americans – and which plays, in a fragile, global world to the fears and hopes of all humanity. But why are our visions like this? Where do they come from? The answers are to be found in our national story – our deep, *true* national story, that is.

Now is the time for this story to be told. For, as many of our most successful TV dramas show, we are still tickled to think of ourselves as a pre-industrial nation of neat hedgerows, old cottages and medieval churches, ruled over by eccentric but good-natured gentlefolk in their tasteful Georgian houses, who represent us in parliament, with the social order capped by a much-loved royal family. It's a vision of ourselves that has hasn't changed much since JB Priestley in the 1930s wrote of cathedrals, cloisters and the Cotswolds. This story tells of a comfortable, slightly boring, undemonstrative, well-mannered sort of people, wedded to a timeless old order, occasionally bizarre or even bull-headed, aware of tensions between the English and the other nations on these islands but convinced they can all be got over with a good-hearted joke.

It's one of the most successfully-told stories ever. And it is a complete, wonderful, bold-as-brass fib. The real story of us – of what we were, and are, and could be – is very different. And it's this real story that a new BBC Two series airing this spring – *Art That Made Us* – aims to tell.

"Britons' unique cultural instinct to preserve, for the future, what is of real value in the past plays to the fears and hopes of all humanity

But where does a series like this begin? Not at the dawn of life and culture on these islands. That would take us back into deep archaeology, into Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age realms. Fascinating as they were, those cultures do not appear so very different from the rest of Europe. What small differences there are just come from the simple logistics of us being off the edge of the continent, meaning that things arrived here a little bit later.

It doesn't look at Roman Britain either, for the simple reason that it was just that – *Roman* Britain – in most ways, just another part of a vast monoculture that spanned all western Europe and the Mediterranean.

This series, in other words, doesn't look at our cultural story when most of what was happening here was largely

BRIDGEMAN

In our dreams The chocolate-box vision of England as a land of timeless continuities and mild-mannered folk (as seen in this 1912 lithograph) is completely mythical, writes James Hawes

NORFOLK MUSEUMS

Head in hands Spong Man (named after the location in which it was found: Spong Hill in Norfolk) is believed to have been carved by Anglo-Saxon settlers in the fifth century. Artefacts such as this "reveal us for who we really are: nations forged, like no other nations in Europe, by waves of massive disruption and mighty renewal", says James Hawes

indistinguishable from most of what was happening on the continent. Instead, it begins at the real beginning: the fall of the Roman empire, the moment of our first great decoupling, the era in which the history of these islands takes off in a direction entirely different to what is going on across the Channel.

That drive came from waves of migrants who left Germany, came here, and wrenched our history onto a unique course, in an act that still echoes in all our heads to this day, every time we speak of the English, the Welsh, the Scots or the Irish.

The very first encounter of the series sets the scene: the UK's pre-eminent modern public sculptor, Antony Gormley, is brought face-to-face (for the first time) with Spong Man, the earliest known sculpture produced on this island by these new migrants from Germany. Gormley considers the figure, compares it with his own work, and explains that, to his surprise, he finds the experience strangely moving. He sees a figure of high status in life, facing mortality: "He's on a chair that is maybe a bit like a throne. He has a place in the world – but he's confronting a place where none of that has meaning anymore."

Artefacts such as Spong Man reveal us for who we really are: nations forged, like no other nations in Europe, by waves of massive disruption and mighty renewal. Peoples who have experienced, generation after generation, invasions and resistances, face-offs between peoples who already lived here and new peoples who wanted to live here, battles between rival beliefs and languages, wars between nations and alliances of nations, power struggles between established rulers and would-be new elites.

Nowhere else can tell such a tale of migration and conquest, reformation and civil war, political and industrial revolution. Every few centuries of our history, these great events threatened to wipe out all that went before – yet every time, a new and unique synthesis arose. It culminated in an extraordinary three centuries that saw the peoples of the British Isles become a single political unit for the first time, and the United Kingdom rise to world-spanning empire, transplanting its dominant language and its ruling ideas far across the globe… only for us to lose the lot within a single lifetime and to face new futures as multicultural nations which seem to be pulling apart once more.

"No wonder our dreams are so vivid. They are born of our extraordinary past, which whispers every day in our ears, and makes us what we are

No wonder our dreams are so vivid. They are born of our extraordinary past, which whispers every day in our ears – whether we know it or not – and makes us what we are.

That is why our creativity plays so widely across the globe to this day. For we humans do not create new and interesting things when we live in long-stable, firmly established ways, our bellies full and our lives set out for us, unchanging, from generation to generation. We are moved to create things anew in times of grand dislocation or great opportunity. As Harry Lime memorably put it in 1949's *The Third Man*, regularly counted as among the greatest British movies ever made: "You know what the fellow said – in Italy, for 30 years under the Borgias, they had warfare, terror, murder and bloodshed, but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and the Renaissance. In Switzerland, they had brotherly love, they had 500 years of democracy and peace. And what did that produce? The cuckoo clock."

Cuckoo clocks? Not for us. Not for peoples who experienced total cultural dislocation in the Dark Ages, colonisation by the Vikings, and three centuries of rule by a French-speaking elite. Not for the land that broke with Rome and executed its own king by due process of law. Not for the unique mix of nations who built a world-spanning empire, dominated and then abolished the slave trade, and created the industrial revolution. And not for the nations that came triumphantly, together, through two world wars, yet lost an empire, then voted very differently from one another when it came to the epochal decision of Brexit. No. Cuckoo clocks are definitely not for us.

Our creative DNA, and the way it speaks to all peoples, is rooted in our unique, restless, fractured and still-unresolved story. H

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Sands of time The sculptor Antony Gormley – shown with one of the statues that make up his "Another Place" installation on Crosby beach – is among the contributors to a BBC Two series exploring the relationship between Britain's creativity and its history

HAVE YOUR SAY

Do you agree that Britain's turbulent past is key to its **current cultural pre-eminence**? Share your views at *letters@historyextra.com*

James Hawes is a historian and novelist. He is a contributor to the eight-part BBC Two series *Art That Made Us*, which is airing now. James has also written the companion book, *Brilliant Isles: Art That Made Us*, published by Old Street Publishing in April

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BBC at 100 PART 5

Sounds of the sixties

Facing fleets of pirate radio stations and teenagers hungry to hear the latest hits, the BBC had to change its tune. **DAVID HENDY** explores how the corporation attempted to reach new audiences in the 1960s

ON THE E PODCAST

Making waves
Staff rehearse for the launch of the new BBC Radio 1 (top), including DJ Kenny Everett, pictured left; and (below) one of the ships used to broadcast the pirate station Radio Caroline, anchored off the Isle of Man. Such unlicensed stations sparked concern

> "The director-general himself had called on BBC staff to throw open the windows and clear the place of its 'ivory-tower stuffiness'"

At 7am on Saturday 30 September 1967, in a windowless studio in London, a pop revolution was ignited. Watched by his producer, the 24-year-old disc-jockey Tony Blackburn switched on his microphone, welcomed listeners across Britain to "the exciting new sound of Radio 1" and placed onto his turntable 'Flowers in the Rain', the latest single from The Move. "It wasn't one of my favourite records," Blackburn later confessed, but "I wanted something nice and happy, something that reflected that era."

As the "Summer of Love" – a season of flower-power, love-ins and teach-ins – reached its psychedelic close, the BBC unveiled a new radio station dedicated to the latest tunes. The newspapers were agog. *The Sunday Telegraph* talked of a "gimmick-ridden" corporation sending the nation's teenagers into orbit. *The Observer* declared it "Auntie's first freak-out".

Never had a freak-out been so widely advertised in advance or so meticulously prepared for. Back in 1964, the fleet of unlicensed "pirate" radio ships that suddenly began beaming non-stop chart hits to mainland Britain from just outside its territorial waters had prompted a flurry of activity both within the BBC, understandably anxious about losing millions of listeners, and in the corridors of government, which worried about copyright and its obligation to enforce international laws over wavelengths. By August 1967, legislation initiated by Tony Benn in his previous role as postmaster general had effectively sunk Radio Caroline, Radio London and the rest, paving the way for the BBC to provide a replacement service.

For months the BBC had been eavesdropping on the pirates, despatching staff on clandestine missions to recruit their best disc jockeys, copying their studio designs and jingles, and conducting dummy-runs of their own new shows. But handing responsibility to the corporation seemed to many observers an unlikely solution to the public's insatiable desire for more pop music. When Benn first floated the idea of a new service, the BBC's chairman is reported to have replied: "You can't have popular music all the time – it would be like having the pubs open all day."

Nor, apparently, were such attitudes confined to the BBC's uppermost ranks. Terry Wogan, who had recently joined from the Irish broadcaster RTE, found a corporation acting like "the British empire under Queen Victoria – incredibly self-confident, indeed probably complacent… entirely convinced of its own rectitude, of its own brilliance, of its own status in the world". It was a self-confidence that Wogan admired, but it had clearly left Britain's national broadcaster floundering to keep pace with musical tastes mutating at lightning speed.

The BBC offered listeners to the Light Programme "the best of today's 'pop' entertainment" on shows such as *Saturday Club* and *Pick of the Pops*; TV viewers could watch the latest hits on *Top of the Pops*. Yet as far as the young music journalist Annie Nightingale was concerned, the rest of its output remained "utterly atrocious", with presenters "talking down" to listeners and playing hours of middle-of-the-road records including 'Twenty Tiny Fingers, Twenty Tiny Toes' or 'Tulips from Amsterdam'.

The future of radio

There were, however, people inside the corporation desperate to drag it firmly into the sixties. The director-general himself, Hugh Carleton Greene, had called on staff to throw open the windows and clear the place of its "ivory-tower stuffiness". He had also told producers that "if you don't upset part of your audience most of the time, you're not doing your job properly".

This signal from the top – that not every programme had to please everyone

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New blood The presenters of the recently launched BBC Radio 1 assemble for a group photo, 1967. The corporation had embarked on a concerted search for fresh talent

– was hugely liberating. It encouraged a concerted push to recruit younger staff: men and women who were not just in touch with contemporary culture but who also enjoyed a healthy irreverence towards authority figures. Adverts for openings at new television channel BBC Two, for instance, went out of their way to specify the need for "new blood"; talent-spotters from Radio Light Entertainment scurried to Cambridge to dangle BBC contracts under the noses of freshly graduated Footlights performers such as John Cleese and Graeme Garden. By 1967, the old guard of producers – described somewhat cruelly as the "chaps with cravats"– had largely made way for a new generation.

Inside Broadcasting House, there had also been much agonised debate about the whole future of radio. For more than a decade, television had soaked up an increasing share of resources, publicity and audiences. A medium that had once held listeners entranced in the nation's sitting rooms looked as if it would have to settle for "background" status, half-listened to in short bursts. The pirates merely confirmed what managers already knew: that the BBC needed to provide more continuous music, and give each of its radio networks a more predictable "generic" identity.

This thinking lay behind a reshuffle of programmes in the middle of the decade that saw a clutch of the speech programmes on the Light and Third programmes moving across to the Home Service, and music series heading the opposite way. The overall direction of travel was clear: the Third and the Light programmes would become more akin to music-only services; the Home Service would be *the* place for talk and debate. Some wondered whether soon all those carefully crafted plays and features would survive at all.

The decision by Radio 1 staff to mark launch day by wearing shirts emblazoned with the slogan "Death to the Home Service" was a light-hearted publicity stunt. It also had an ominous ring.

GETTY IMAGES

Terry Wogan pictured during his radio show, 1970. He thought the BBC was "entirely convinced of its own brilliance"

Speaking to younger listeners

In the strictest sense, the Home Service *had* just died. At the precise hour of Radio 1's birth, the old triumvirate of Light, Third and Home also disappeared – reborn as Radio 2, Radio 3 and Radio 4 respectively. All the press attention, however, was on the BBC's new pop station, and those early reviews were far from friendly. Ludovic Kennedy complained of ignorant DJs mangling the English language. In *The Observer* George Melly suggested that, despite comprehensively plagiarising the pirates, the BBC had created something "lifeless".

This was all a little unjust. It was presenter Tony Blackburn who decided to wear a suit and tie in the studio; his producers preferred the latest flowery shirts. "There was nobody who came to me and said: 'Oh, we'd rather you did it that way or this way,'" he recalled. "They wanted that pirate radio sound, and that's exactly what we gave them."

If anything held Radio 1 back, it was the music industry's strict limits on the amount of copyrighted music that could be played on air. The BBC had previously been allocated roughly 30 hours a week for all its networks

combined. The arrival of Radio 1 extended this by a measly two hours. The result was a schedule bulked out with royalty-free versions of the latest hits performed by a BBC house orchestra or long stretches of time-filling chat.

The constant ad-libbing was clearly a departure for the BBC – and proved discomfiting to older listeners. But at least it meant, in the words of the station's controller, that the corporation was finally speaking to its younger listeners in "the language of the mid-60s". This, he added, was now "the new style of radio… the way to go".

His prediction turned out to be accurate. By the next year UK record sales were up noticeably, Radio 1's audience ratings were buoyant, and a rota of appearances on *Top of the Pops* – plus a carefully managed image as "boyfriend" substitutes for young female listeners – had cast the new station's DJs as real-life pop stars, mobbed everywhere they went. It all felt a world away from the postwar atmosphere of the Home, Light and Third.

But by now even the controller of Radio 4 was telling staff that he wanted less of the "slightly stiff, slightly buttoned-up formats" inherited from the Home, and more of what he called "the raw stuff" of spontaneous talk: his own station's schedule was now under review. Whatever the future might bring, a ripple of satisfaction could be felt throughout Broadcasting House. Radio, once deemed old-fashioned, was back in the public eye: a little more spry, a little more confident, reaching tentatively toward a looser, livelier style in tune with the age. H

David Hendy is emeritus professor at the University of Sussex. His latest book is *The BBC: A People's History* (Profile, 2022)

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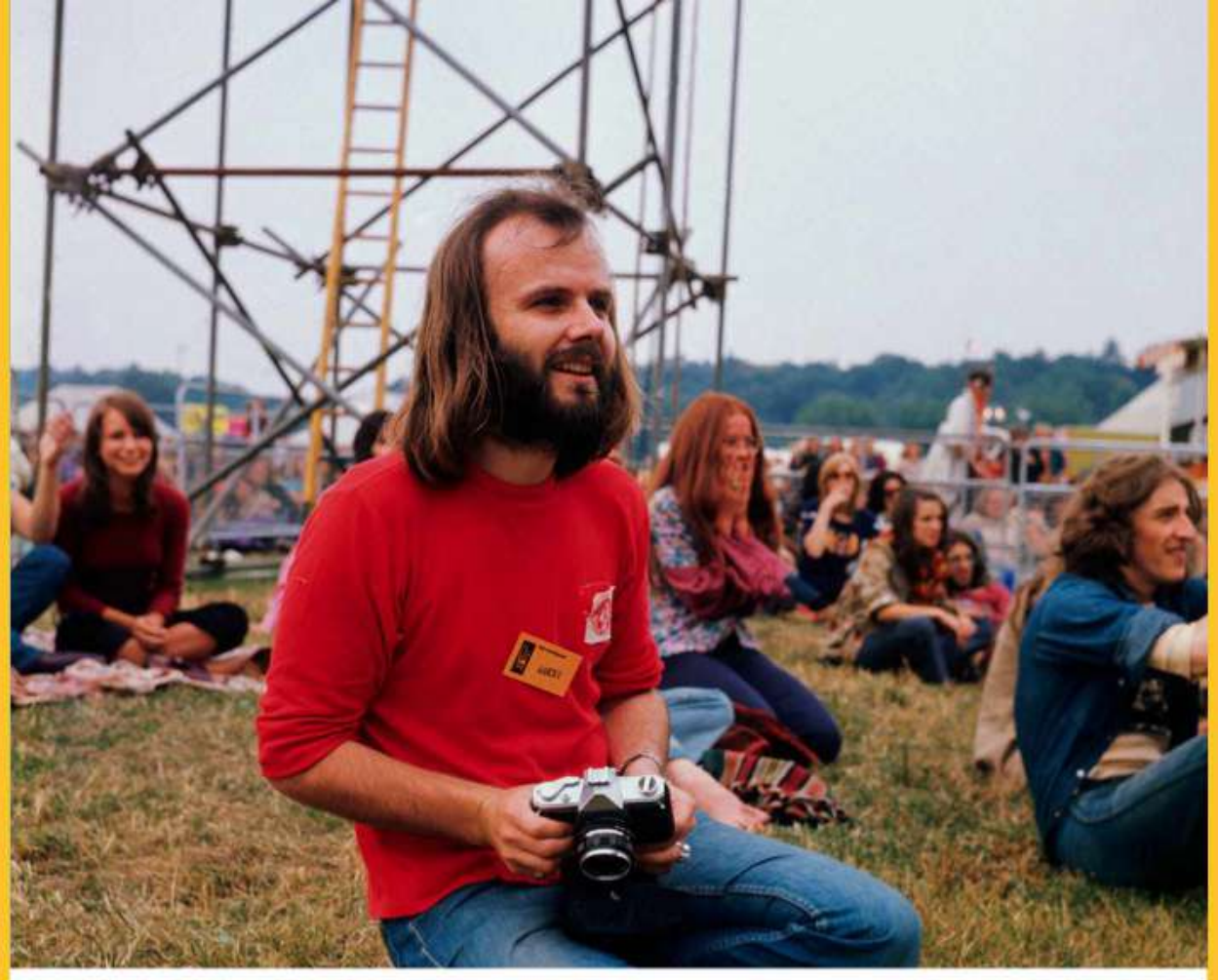
A 1960s radio set. It was during that decade that the medium recaptured the attention of the nation's listeners, despite the increasing popularity of TV



Musical pioneer John Peel pictured at Reading Festival, c1970. The DJ's eclectic taste and uncompromising approach were key in establishing BBC Radio 1's reputation

TOPFOTO/GETTY IMAGES

IN FOCUS

John Peel: the DJ who broadened the horizons of generations of listeners

Tony Blackburn might have embodied the cheery, cheesy style of the BBC's new pop station during the day. But the DJ who did most to establish its reputation for showcasing the esoteric outer reaches of contemporary music at night was John Peel.

He made his debut on Sunday 1 October 1967 co-presenting the free-wheeling, three-hour long, rock-focused radio programme *Top Gear*. Within months, he was a regular on *Night Ride*. And in the years ahead he would host, among others, *Sounds of the Seventies*, *In Concert*, and the eponymous, seemingly everlasting *John Peel Show*.

The *Radio Times* billed him rather blandly as the man who would play "the coolest sounds around". But Peel did more than that. Having spent his young adult life drifting through dead-end jobs in the United States, browsing the record stores and doing late-night shifts on any radio station that would take him, he had accumulated a vast knowledge of the prog rock, R&B and blues scenes.

His tastes were ever-curious and largely unpredictable. For the show he presented on the pirate station Radio London, he dropped the adverts and weather reports to make way for more of the music that had taken his fancy. It was this languid, hippyish style and uncompromising approach that had convinced Radio 1's controller that he would attract a huge cult following on the BBC.

Once installed, Peel stuck to his belief that it was his civic duty to introduce listeners to music they had little chance of hearing anywhere else on Britain's airwaves. And although it was hard to imagine the corporation's founding father ever tuning in, these late-night shows were entirely in line with John Reith's own enduring philosophy: that, in making the strange familiar, the BBC could shape public taste, rather than merely reflecting it. As John Peel put it in his own inimitable way: "The programmes with which I'm involved are aimed at turning y'all on to some musicks that you might not otherwise investigate."

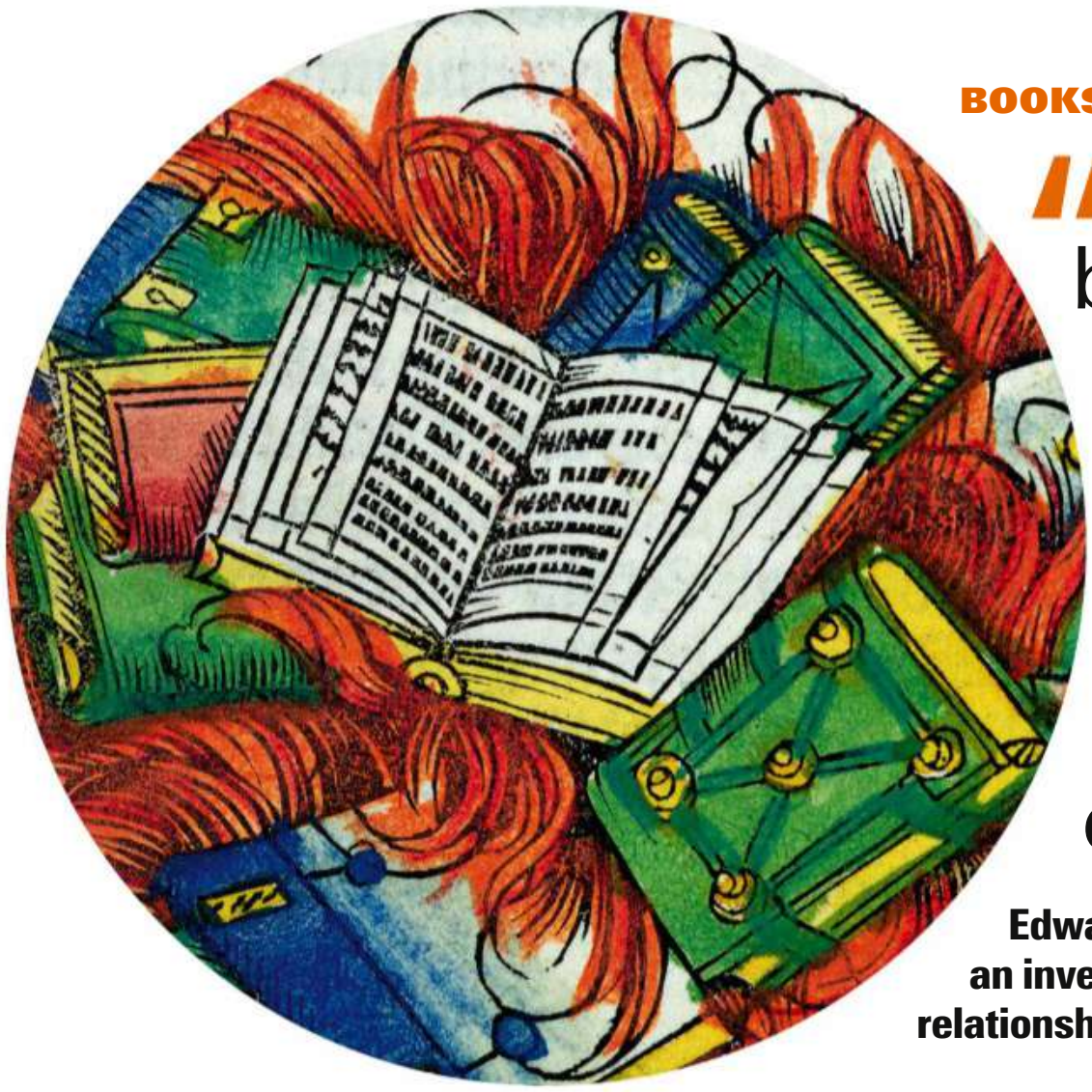
> "Peel's languid, hippyish style convinced Radio 1's controller that he would attract a huge following"

BOOKS

MEDICINE

"In a striking display of bravura, Catherine the Great volunteered as a test patient for variolation"

Patricia Fara on a study of European efforts to defeat smallpox › page 81



BOOKS

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"Overall the book creates a far better understanding of Ferdinand Magellan than any previous work"

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"It is the emperors who have left us their own thoughts in writing whose lives jump off the page"

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INTERVIEW / KRIS MANJAPRA

"Black communities have had to pay for the failures of emancipation"

KRIS MANJAPRA speaks to Ellie Cawthorne about his new book, which explores how emancipations of enslaved people have left troubled legacies that still endure today

ON THE EI PODCAST

Ellie Cawthorne: You argue in *Black Ghost of Empire* that "the history of emancipation from slavery is not a story of endings, but unendings". What do you mean by that?
Kris Manjapra: We tend to think of the ending of slavery as a "once-and-done" moment. But in fact there was a long period, spanning around 100 years, during which there were various different moments of emancipation. And when you look closely at all those events, as my book does, you can identify a through line. You see that, rather than the end of slavery disrupting the racial caste system, the ways in which emancipations played out in reality actually conspired to perpetuate it. Emancipation processes provided failed pathways to justice for people who had been enslaved, in a way that was often intentional.

You look at different emancipations across the globe, and categorise them into types. Could you outline those?
It may come as a surprise to learn that the very first emancipations were actually in the American North – around Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and New York. 1780 in Philadelphia was a germination moment in which a particular template for emancipation emerged: the "gradual emancipation" model. This was a process whereby enslaved adults would continue to live in slavery for the rest of their lives. Children born into slavery could look forward to freedom, but that freedom would only be given after a long period of enslavement – potentially 18 to 25 years. That was the basic model for gradual emancipations across the American North.

Black Ghost of Empire: The Long Death of Slavery and the Failure of Emancipation
by Kris Manjapra
(Allen Lane, 256 pages, £20)

Fast forward to 1807, when the slave trade – but not the practice of slavery itself – was abolished in the British empire, and we observe what I call the "sea emancipations". British patrollers were capturing slave vessels and taking enslaved people to an emancipation colony located at Freetown, Sierra Leone, a British holding in west Africa. People went from being held in the belly of a slave ship to being brought before a court where they could then be made free through a legal process. But this freedom still required them to serve 14 years in a so-called "apprenticeship" – basically, slavery by another name. These apprenticeship or indentureship systems developed as another way of prolonging the racial caste system even after the official end of slavery as an institution.

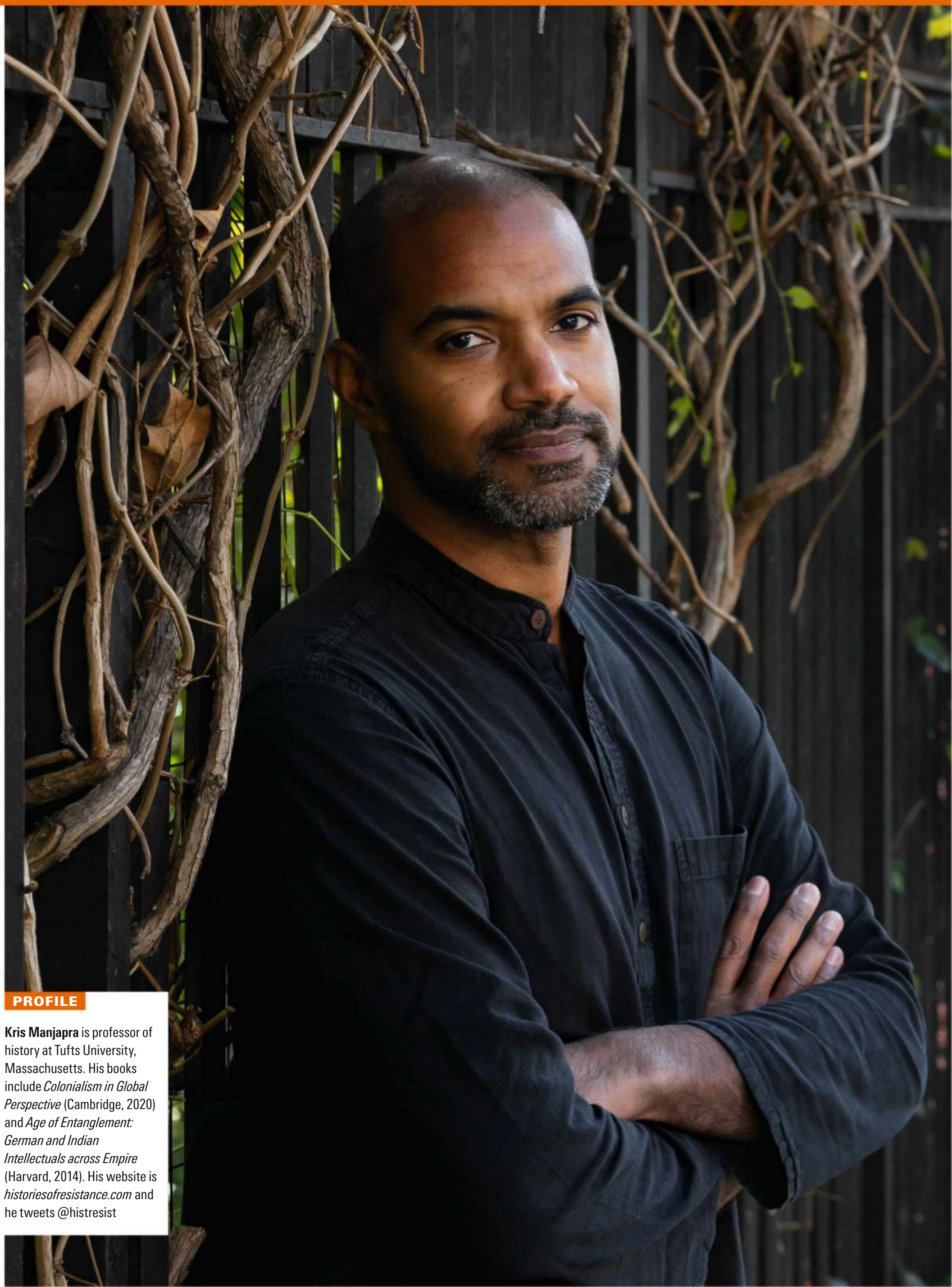
Then we come to the 1830s. The British empire – which, by this time, was identifying itself worldwide as the "anti-slavery empire" – designed a new kind of emancipation. This was the "compensated emancipation" model, in which slave owners received money as reparation for the loss of their "property". A very sophisticated logistical and administrative project was established to compensate more than 44,000 slave owners across the British empire [who received around £20m in total]. That model of financially compensating slave owners became a gold standard internationally, and was replicated in places including France, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden.

Now we arrive at a canonical moment in US history – the Civil War – and what I call the "war emancipation" model. In the other emancipations, governments were playing a very careful game, trying to keep the peace between the proponents of freedom and the proponents of slavery, but in this context it broke down into all-out war. Yet it was not the case that the enslaved won out, because the emancipation laws that emerged during that decade [the 1860s] were still tinged by efforts to reconcile with slave-owning interests. Again, it was slave owners who were compensated, not the enslaved – this time through policy decisions, legal mechanisms and the confiscation of the lands that had been given to the newly freed people as a form of early reparations. Government policy emerged as an important domain in which, by design, newly freed people were yet again dispossessed and slave owners were yet again compensated.

Finally, I look at how the British, French and other empires turned their sights on Africa from the 1880s onwards, in what's known as the "Scramble for Africa". That collection of imperial projects and wars was again exercised under the banner of emancipation – in the name of freeing African people from slavery – but I view it instead as the beginning of a truly global war on black lives.

Even as they had different characteristics, these types of emancipation built on each other in interesting ways. They all shared a common thread: that enslaved people never received reparations. Reparations *were* granted in a variety of ways; they were just paid the wrong way – to the slave owners.

You also examine the Haitian Revolution of the late 18th century, in which enslaved people overthrew French colonial rule. How was Haiti's future as a nation determined by its past as a former slave society?
What happened in Haiti is really a meditation on how freedom could be secured outside the emancipation process. It helps us understand that liberation from slavery is not the same as emancipation. During the revolutionary period, the Haitian people essentially refused to



BEOWULF SHEEHAN

PROFILE

Kris Manjapra is professor of history at Tufts University, Massachusetts. His books include *Colonialism in Global Perspective* (Cambridge, 2020) and *Age of Entanglement: German and Indian Intellectuals across Empire* (Harvard, 2014). His website is *historiesofresistance.com* and he tweets @histresist

engage in an emancipation process that had been imposed on them by the French empire. They intended to claim their own freedom.

In response to the Haitian Revolution, the French empire and the international community, including the US, colluded to diplomatically exclude Haiti from the international order. They boycotted the country for many decades; the US didn't officially recognise Haiti until 1862. In the 1820s, the French decided that the only way that they would allow Haiti to enter the international system was if they were able to impose the emancipation that they hadn't had a chance to implement during the revolutionary period.

This "retroactive emancipation" was imposed some 20 years after the fact, onto a people who already were free. It basically inflicted on Haiti a legal system and a debt system that sought to reassert the racial caste order, the crux of which was that Haiti had to pay the French empire a large sum of money. In some ways this was just like manumission, the long-standing system by which a slave could pay their "owner" a sum of money in order to redeem their freedom. The Haitian state suffered under that debt burden for the better part of a century and a half; you could argue that this retroactive emancipation was the origin of third-world debt. It was rooted in the logic that emancipation was intended to perpetuate, not disrupt, systems of oppression.

Do you think that these failures in the emancipation processes were due to misjudgment and mismanagement, or by design?
I think it's a bit of both. It was never a consideration of the decision makers to bring the black people directly affected to the decision-making table. That allowed for oversights and callousness. In order for there to be legal remedies for harm and restorative justice, you have to listen to the victims.

I do think there was also an element of design at work, but I don't think it was ultimately about malevolence. Rather, it was about something much more mundane – economic interests. There were obviously many who were going to lose out financially from the freeing of African people. Banking interests, political interests and industrial interests had all benefitted from extracting free labour from black people. So it makes sense that those groups would do everything they possibly could to find a way around abolition and to maintain their interests.

> **"For 180 years British taxpayers had financed a loan that the government had taken out to pay off slave owners across the British empire"**

In highlighting these issues, your book challenges traditional narratives about emancipation and abolition. How successful do you think we are at commemorating this aspect of history?
What's interesting to me is that, despite this very troubling history of what emancipations really meant, black communities have always celebrated and commemorated them. Juneteenth [19 June, commemorating the emancipation of African-Americans] has become a national American holiday. And across many black nations that suffered under British rule, 1 August is still celebrated as Emancipation Day.

What's important here, though, is what different communities bring to the meaning of the word "emancipation". Rather than being celebrated in black communities as the end of something, emancipation is actually being commemorated to mark a renewed dedication to the ongoing struggle. That's a very different way of thinking about our past than simply "moving on" from it – which is always a temptation, especially for histories that haunt us. But we can't wish away these ghosts. We have to invite them in and figure out what they are asking from us for the future.

Are the aftershocks of these failed emancipations still being felt?
Yes – and I'll give you an example. Back in 2018, I was rummaging around in archives, as historians do, and I noticed a line in a British Treasury report from 2015, saying the Slave Compensation Act Loan had finally been paid off. That caught my attention, because I could not imagine how a loan taken out in 1835 could have only just been paid off in 2015. Yet for 180 years, British taxpayers had been financing a loan that the British government took out to pay off slave owners across the

Price of freedom
An 18th-century engraving of the Haitian Revolution. Decades later, the French demanded vast sums of money from Haiti as part of its "retroactive emancipation"

BRIDGEMAN

Battle stations
African-American sailors during the US Civil War. This conflict witnessed what Kris Manjapra describes as the "war emancipation" model

British empire. This story is a good example of the way that decisions made almost 200 years ago still have implications in terms of policy, law and taxation – it's a legacy that affects us to this day.

And intergenerationally, black communities have had to pay for the consequences of the designs implemented during emancipation processes. If we look at Britain and the US today, we see that black communities still suffer from overexposure to the criminal legal system, and instability around access to education, food, financing, land and political representation. The question then naturally arises: how do we explain that? As a historian, I know that the answer is in the legacies of the past. It's not only slavery to blame; the failed process through which slavery ended also perpetuated these forms of social injustice.

In Jamaica, for example, when slavery officially ended with emancipation in 1838, enslaved people walked into a new legal category of "freedom" – but they were still barred from political representation, and had no voice in Jamaica's assembly. This was the case across all of the British colonies. Furthermore, just as slavery was ending, the British state was investing heavily in the vast expansion of the prison-industrial complex across its plantation colonies, essentially turning slave colonies into prison colonies. Newly freed people were criminalised, with no access to the vote or equitable political representation. If they wanted land they had to squat on the land of the former slave owners because there was no reparations process to redistribute the land to them. The legacy of all of this can still be felt today.

The problems that still bedevil us emerged in part because the harm done through slavery was never redressed. Instead it was carried forward over time, encoded in the criminal legal system and a variety of other dimensions of government policy.

You write that the ghosts in our past demand reparatory action. How do you think such reparations could be made in 2022?

The call for reparations is nothing new. By the end of the 18th century, black people were already organising to argue for reparations; that struggle was in some ways an impetus for writing this book. People say: "Shouldn't we move on, rather than crying over spilt milk?" But if we recognise that this is a source of on-going woe for our societies, then we can see that it's a question not about the past but about our present and future.

History teaches us that paying reparations is feasible, because it has been done before – they've just been paid the wrong way round. The real question is what form reparations should take. One aspect of this is financial compensation – the law says that if there is harm, there must be recompense – and the discussion around proper compensation to black communities today is one that should continue.

But it's not only about financial payouts. One mere transactional writing of a cheque, for example, is not going to be sufficient. Don't forget that reparations were made to slave owners not only in monetary terms but also in legal codes and policy decisions that benefitted them. Two hundred years have passed since the first emancipation began, and we are still paying the social cost for bad decisions made back then. We are now at a point where we can choose, by making good decisions around food, housing, education, legal representation, political representation and financing, to break the cycle and do things that are going to help generations 200 years from now.

There are two other related questions that I think are absolutely essential to ask. What does a proper apology look like? And how do we retell our histories together? The history of abolition and emancipation has been told as a triumphant story of white male abolitionists. But I think there's another way of telling the story that looks not just to heroes – whom we must certainly respect – but also at the perspective of black communities. That leads us to discussions about the things that went wrong that still need to be fixed today. And I think that gives us the path to transform the reparations debate as it currently exists. H

MORE FROM US

Listen to an extended version of this interview with Kris Manjapra on our **podcast** at *historyextra.com/podcast*

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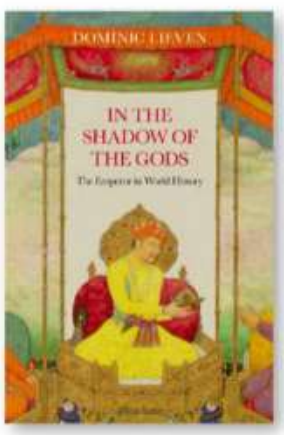
Palace performance
Members of the Chinese court celebrate spring during the Han dynasty (206 BC–AD 220). Dominic Lieven's book sets the lives and achievements of emperors in the context of their families and advisors

IMPERIAL

Gods among men

JANE DRAYCOTT applauds an ambitious journey through the global history of emperors, from the most ancient civilisations to the 20th-century demise of world-spanning realms



In the Shadow of the Gods: The Emperor in World History
by Dominic Lieven
Allen Lane,
528 pages, £35

In this exploration of imperial figures, global history meets the "great man" (and even the occasional "great woman") theory of leadership for a lively and at times surprisingly personal romp through the past 3,000 years of Eurasian history.

Lieven focuses on a carefully curated selection of empires and the emperors who led them, making comparisons between the different examples. He also draws analogies with modern institutions, even going so far as to highlight relevant contemporary individuals such as politicians and monarchs – New Zealand's prime minister Jacinda Ardern, for example, dealing with the demands of having a baby while holding power, as did the Habsburg ruler Maria Theresa. Using this approach, Lieven manages to make the subject accessible and relatable.

Starting with the city-states of Mesopotamia, Lieven surveys the empires of antiquity, including Achaemenid Persia, Rome and Han China. He progresses through late antiquity and into the early modern period, where he discusses the Islamic empires, the Holy Roman empire and the Ottoman empire, to name a few. Then he travels into the post-industrial revolution empires of the more recent past – think Romanov Russia and Britain's imperial project – before concluding in the 20th century with the precipitous decline of empire, triggered by the First World War and its aftermath. He succinctly traces how these various empires rose and fell via their acquisition of territories both near and far; their gradual increases in size and complexity; and the development of the military, administrative, social and cultural systems necessary to maintain them – at least for a little while.

Understandably, not all emperors included are covered in the same depth. Particular attention is paid to those who can be truly

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said to have shaped global history rather than simply being part of it – such as Augustus, founder of Rome's imperial regime and inspiration to many successors, both members of his own Julio-Claudian dynasty and numerous others over the succeeding centuries. Lieven highlights the successes and failures of these figures – and, on occasion, even the total collapse of their dynasties and empires.

Throughout, he emphasises the fundamental humanity of his subjects, and notes the many and varied demands placed upon an emperor (who was, after all, just a man or woman like any other, albeit on occasion somewhat more intelligent and capable than their peers). Lieven demonstrates, too, that not every emperor was capable of rising to the challenge, whether because of individual or situational circumstances; significant here are issues such as infancy, insanity, impotence and illegitimacy, none of which was the fault of the individuals themselves.

Whereas certain qualities such as charisma were important for the founders of dynasties who needed to solidify their positions, they were less crucial for their successors once those dynasties had been established – and even less once they were so entrenched that a workable alternative was not obvious. Likewise, military genius had its place but, if it wasn't subsequently supported by a clear and viable line of succession and sustained administrative competence, it could get one only so far. Consider as examples the immense empires of Alexander the Great and Napoleon Bonaparte, both of which collapsed in record time following their demise.

It is the emperors who have left us their own thoughts set down in writing – such as Marcus Aurelius and Catherine the Great – whose lives jump off the page and provide a more private perspective. For those who produced handbooks on leadership for their heirs, we can get a sense of how they viewed their invidious positions, and what they considered important. One example is China's Tang emperor Taizong (AD 598–649), who publicly and performatively devoured a plate of the locusts that were plaguing his people's crops. And for those who authored autobiographies or memoirs, the inclusion of charming anecdotes can serve to humanise them. We hear, for example, from Babur – founder of the Mughal empire – fretting about the quality of his Persian poetry.

Of course, emperors did not exist in isolation: their relationships with their blood relatives, spouses, courtesans, favourites, ministers and generals all impacted them, in some cases proving a considerable source of strength and in others fatally undermining their positions. One particularly thought-provoking aspect of imperial rule covered extensively here is the fact that European empires – for better or worse – formally practised primogeniture, whereas Asian empires generally did not. Instead, they encouraged a fight to the death between rival candidates for the succession, with the title going to the last man standing.

Also discussed are the dangers of emperors breaking with tradition and trying to experiment and innovate, particularly in respect of religion – such as Amenhotep/Akhenaten's short-lived efforts to transition Egypt from a polytheistic society to a monotheistic one. Emperors' plans to address social justice also often fared poorly – for example, Russian tsar Alexander I's failed drive to abolish serfdom.

The perils of attempting too much too soon without the support of subordinates are also explored using as an example Ottoman sultan Osman II: his attempts to reassert royal power were stymied by his own Janissary troops, who assassinated him. For all that an emperor typically was, in theory, all-powerful, each was dependent upon the continuing alliance of the ruling dynasty and the aristocracy, and the goodwill afforded to them by it.

> **"Not every emperor was capable of rising to the challenge, their success limited by issues such as infancy, insanity, impotence and illegitimacy"**

It would be remiss to conclude without mentioning that Lieven takes notable and admirable pains to acknowledge the profoundly negative aspects of empire – particularly nationalism, colonisation, ethnic cleansing, genocide, racism and misogyny.

This candour is refreshing, as is the fact that the book concludes with an acknowledgement of the role that climate change played in the rise and fall of the empires in the past, and the contribution that it could make to the rise and fall of nations in the future. Finally, though Lieven concluded the research and writing of this work long before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, it provides a significant amount of context for the tragedy that, at the time of writing, is ongoing. H

Jane Draycott is a Roman historian and lecturer in classics at the University of Glasgow

BOB FOYERS

AUTHORS ON THE PODCAST

Elizabeth Boyle on grief in the Middle Ages

"Medieval people weren't numb to the idea of death – they certainly grieved as much as we do. But when researching medieval emotion we must bear in mind that we need to navigate between what might be a glimpse of private emotion and a communal expression of feeling. Most medieval sources have been written for an audience, and they aren't necessarily people writing down their private thoughts."

Kojo Koram on the economic and legal legacies of empire

"Part of the reason why the legacy of empire has been ignored in Britain is because it's been convenient for the debate to be presented as being about identity politics, not concerns over long-term wealth inequality or insecurity of work. By moving the conversation away from culture and onto legal and economic issues, we can fill in the historical blanks and bring together people who are concerned with both issues."

Kersten Hall on the discovery of insulin

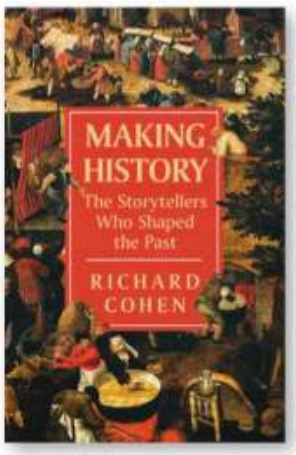
"When insulin was first discovered, the press proclaimed that it was a miracle cure for diabetes – but the scientists involved knew otherwise. What insulin did was transform a fatal illness into a long-term condition that needed careful management. It's seductive to think that the folks in white coats will always find solutions, but to be truly effective these innovations must go hand in hand with responsible behaviour on our part."

ON THE EH PODCAST

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Spinning stories

HELEN CARR assesses a magisterial overview of how people have represented the past, from medieval propaganda to historical fiction



Making History: The Storytellers Who Shaped the Past
by Richard Cohen
W&N, 784 pages, £25

Unpicking the past The Bayeux Tapestry has had a huge influence on our view of the events of 1066. Far from being an unbiased account, though, the embroidery is a piece of Norman and Anglo-Saxon propaganda

"Before you study the history, study the historian," said EH Carr in his 1961 lecture series 'What Is History?' In these lectures, later turned into a book, he argued that no writer of history has ever been able to recount the past without being influenced by their own present and human experience.

It is Carr's direction to study the historian – a call against objective history – upon which Richard Cohen expands in *Making History*. This in-depth analysis considers those who have written about the past, and how their writing was influenced by their present.

Cohen begins with the so-called "father of history", Herodotus, and considers how much the ancient Greek writer was influenced by his world and personal experiences when writing *The Histories*. Herodotus was perhaps the earliest narrative historian, erudite and lyrical, journalistic in his approach of collecting reports. But at times he also played fast and loose with the truth, leading Plutarch to critique Herodotus as the "father of lies". Despite this, Cohen argues that *The Histories* formed "a new way of seeing". Certainly, Herodotus's approach to history writing was different from that of his slightly later counterpart, Thucydides, who – unlike Herodotus – drew entirely from his own research and experiences.

However, it is not only written history that has influenced our view of the past. The Bayeux Tapestry, Cohen notes, has "influenced our understanding of history possibly more than any other pictorial artefact". Millions of schoolchildren have pressed their noses against the glass at the Bayeux Museum in Normandy to soak in the history of the conquest. Likely created by the nuns at St Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury, the Tapestry tells the well-versed story about England's past as both Norman and Anglo-Saxon propaganda.

The Middle Ages were also a period rife with political propaganda. Chroniclers frequently pitched their viewpoints against one another in order to appease a patron's perspective or a religious standpoint. William Shakespeare shook this up with his vision of the past, in which he offered historical figures "a psychological depth they had not received before in English drama". The playwright introduced tropes and caricatures that still endure today, and which have irrevocably influenced our perception of the past and its politics.

By the 18th and 19th centuries, fictive history had gathered pace, and writers such as Walter Scott – author of *Rob Roy* and *Ivanhoe* – were prolific. Leo Tolstoy's epic *War and Peace*, argues Cohen, is "the world's likely best historical novel", and it was followed by a "roll call of notable novelists" interested in romantic nationalism, epic costume drama and romance. Moving on to the 20th century, Toni Morrison's work is praised as "history, sociology, folklore, nightmare and music". Hilary Mantel notes the importance of historical fiction, too, writing: "If we want added value – to imagine not just how the past was, but what it felt like from the inside – we pick up a novel."

"Herodotus was the earliest narrative historian, with a lyrical style and a journalistic approach – but at times he also played fast and loose with the truth"

Because history is largely written by privileged white men, Cohen's chapters 'Herstory' and 'Who Tells Our Story?' are important. In the latter, Cohen acknowledges that black history has been mostly ignored. From accounts of life during the Confederacy to slave narratives – such as Elizabeth Keckley's 1868 chronicle of her life as an enslaved person and her subsequent freedom – Cohen devotes this chapter to the development of black history writing from the 19th century to the present. He's optimistic that black history now has an indisputable place in historical discourse.

Making History proves that Carr's lesson to "study the historian" is a good one. This is a biblical text for scholars of history to navigate what it means to write the past.

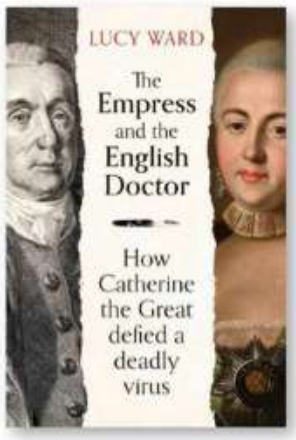
Helen Carr is the co-editor of *What Is History, Now?* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2021)

GETTY IMAGES

MEDICINE

Great inoculations

PATRICIA FARA appraises a pacy account of 18th-century European efforts to protect against smallpox



The Empress and the English Doctor: How Catherine the Great Defied a Deadly Virus
by Lucy Ward
Oneworld, 352 pages, £20

In the lottery of smallpox, declared French mathematician and explorer Charles-Marie de La Condamine, "everyone has his ticket, and many every year must draw the blank of Death".

Viruses are not alive, yet they create more havoc than the most powerful monarch. Whatever anti-vaxxers may claim, Queen Elizabeth II faced only a minuscule risk when she received a Covid vaccination. The stakes were far higher for two earlier female royals, Caroline of Ansbach (who became the queen of George II) and Catherine the Great, who set national examples during the battle against smallpox by publicly endorsing variolation, an early form of protection that induced a week of sickness with no guarantee of survival.

In her new book, Lucy Ward provides a racy but detailed account of these initiatives. She begins with an episode that is already fairly well known, describing how Caroline whipped up popular support for the procedure shortly after another enterprising woman, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, had introduced inoculation from Turkey. In 1722, the Hanoverian princess subjected two of her daughters to the painful ordeal: they both survived – though the procedure remained dangerous, later killing a son of George III.

Voltaire pithily summarised the rock-and-a-hard-place aspects of variolation, remarking that, while Europeans condemned the English as "fools because they give their children smallpox to prevent their children catching it", Englishmen regarded Europeans as cowards "afraid of giving a little pain to their children" and thus exposing them "to death from smallpox sometime in the future".

By the time Catherine the Great became involved in the 1760s, the techniques had been improved and the odds were more favourable. Frustrated after being cooped up during an epidemic, the Russian empress resolved on a striking display of bravura: she volunteered as a test patient. This demanded courage; indeed, after summoning England's expert, the Quaker physician Thomas Dimsdale, she was sufficiently worried about the experiment's outcome to organise an escape route for him on a hidden yacht. Insisting on the strictest secrecy, she endured the inevitable fever and pustules that followed variolation before emerging triumphantly to advertise her courage and promote the procedure across Russia.

Ward's book is informative, enthusiastically written and based on thorough research, but suffers from a somewhat breathless style. Seeking to emphasise Catherine's commitment to rationality, Ward opens by complaining that sexual liaisons too often overshadow Catherine's legacy – then, in the very next paragraph, confides that the empress and her physician concocted their secret plans while sitting on her bed with one of her lovers.

Unsurprisingly, Ward grounds her book in comparisons between the current global chaos and previous viral pandemics. But that is no longer an original approach: her book has been preceded by several others that explore connections and glorify unsung heroes. Perhaps I'm being over-cynical, but I anticipate that the next medical pot-boiler will be about Onesimus, the enslaved African who saved America by teaching his enslaver – a Puritan minister – about inoculation. H

Patricia Fara is an emeritus fellow of Clare College, Cambridge. She is the winner of this year's Abraham Pais Prize for History of Physics from the American Physical Society

Risk taker
Catherine the Great (pictured) braved smallpox variolation to help boost public confidence in the procedure

GETTY IMAGES

FROM FACT TO FICTION

Going for gold

Paddy Crewe (below) discusses his novel about the fortunes of a mute teenager during the 19th-century Georgia gold rush

Why does the Georgia gold rush make such an interesting setting for a novel?
It was the lack of information about it that I think first attracted me. Having a time frame in which to set your characters, and an event around which to organise them, is very helpful for a first-time novelist – but having the freedom to move them around without compromising the historical accuracy or authenticity of the book was also important for me.

The protagonist, Yip, is mute. How did you research the experiences of mute people in the period?
As with other areas of the book, I did my best to research this aspect of my story. Unsurprisingly, I found that mute people – indeed, pretty much anybody who had a disability – were shunned, and would struggle to avoid pariah status. I ended up getting a piece of slate and some chalk for myself in order to have some conversations with people using them. It was striking to feel how the rhythm of my thoughts changed drastically when I couldn't speak.

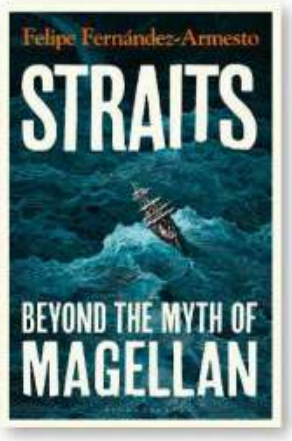
Were you inspired by any real people from the era?
I was a big fan of David Milch's TV series *Deadwood* – a Western set in the Dakota Territory in the 1870s – in which many real historical characters appear. The show was brilliantly written, and to see those characters come to life through such amazing use of language was a big inspiration.

My Name Is Yip
by Paddy Crewe
Penguin, 384 pages, £14.99

EXPLORATION

Voyage into the unknown

MARGARET SMALL commends a new biography of Ferdinand Magellan that looks beyond the Portuguese explorer's globe-circling achievements to reveal the man behind the myth



Straits: Beyond the Myth of Magellan
by Felipe Fernández-Armesto
Bloomsbury, 384 pages, £25

In *Straits*, we see a master of his craft at work. Fernández-Armesto is arguably the leading scholar of our times in making the early European Age of Discovery accessible to a wider audience. In this book, he takes on the biography of Ferdinand Magellan, the Portuguese explorer often referred to as the world's first circumnavigator (although he died en route), who set out on his last great voyage in 1519.

Fernández-Armesto draws on his vast knowledge of the wider context of European explorations: the geographical understanding and economic situation of the era. As he acknowledges, the first chapter – which particularly focuses on historical context – draws heavily on his book *1492: The Year Our World Began*. But as a synthesis of the background to the Age of Discovery it is excellent, providing one of the clearest short guides to the forces that shaped the European drive for exploration. The author then moves on to probe the life, mindset and actions of Magellan himself, from childhood to death.

The book is built from the sources up, and here Fernández-Armesto shows his absolute command of the material, using a multiplicity of documents ranging from depositions of survivors captured by the Portuguese to official Spanish records. His linguistic capabilities are important here, too.

The sources are difficult to navigate; at points, the intricacies of both the voyage and the decision-making are almost impossible to discern. However, having highlighted the problems created by gaps and contradictions in the sources, Fernández-Armesto uses his own knowledge of the geography of the area to help the reader visualise and better understand the environment and context of the voyage through the strait now named after Magellan. He also expounds his theory of the navigator's route across the Pacific; the evidence is too poor and contradictory to be certain of this route, but the author makes a convincing case. However, in addition to the helpful maps illustrating the book, I would have liked one more to demonstrate the route that Fernández-Armesto proposes for Magellan's Pacific crossing.

Overall, the book provides a far better understanding of Magellan than any previous work. It comprehensively dismantles the heroic myth, and paints a well-rounded picture that is far from eulogistic. From these pages emerges the image of an irascible, egocentric, driven man. Magellan was, the author shows, a gambler, capable of treachery and vindictiveness, who would endure no criticism but who could also inspire staggering and enduring loyalty – particularly, though not exclusively, from ordinary seamen. He was determined to exert sole authority, and to compel obedience.

Fernández-Armesto shows clearly how far Magellan exceeded his remit in claiming sole charge of the expedition, effectively demoting his co-leader, the Spaniard Juan de Cartagena, whom he later marooned off the coast of Patagonia after an attempted mutiny. But we also discover how Magellan won support to overcome the mutineers and pursue his voyage, even though it was already doomed to failure – since it had already proved so long and difficult, it was demonstrably not a viable trade route to the spice islands.

The book's only weakness is, perhaps, in failing to demonstrate clearly how and why the navigator won enduring support from so many, long after his naked ambition had led him to continue a disastrous voyage. That charming side of Magellan is the least clearly conveyed or understood. H

"Ferdinand Magellan was capable of treachery and vindictiveness, but he could also inspire staggering and enduring loyalty among his men"

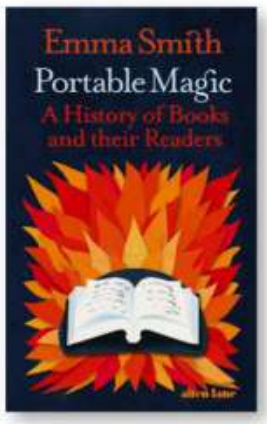
Margaret Small is a senior lecturer in early modern history at the University of Birmingham

GETTY IMAGES

Adventure on the high seas A fantastical depiction of Ferdinand Magellan's adventures. The explorer died during his attempted circumnavigation of the world, after crushing a mutiny that bubbled over among his crew

CULTURE

Between the lines



Portable Magic: A History of Books and their Readers
by Emma Smith
Allen Lane, 352 pages, £20

Reading books for review is often a hurried activity but, luckily, *Portable Magic* is not a book to be read slowly. Instead, it sweeps the reader along in its wake – much as the spellbook does the foolish young boy in the "Sorcerer's Apprentice", the story with which Emma Smith begins her book. It is a well-chosen opening salvo: Smith is herself a magical writer – stealing a pinch of literary history here, mixing it with a dab of popular culture there, all the while swinging the wide-sleeved arms of her prose to keep everything in motion.

In 16 chapters, Smith whirls us through many aspects of books that we rarely notice – not so much what their words tell us but, rather, how these words are transformed by the objects in which we encounter them. The shape and substance of the book – its proportions, materials and construction – are often a key part of its eloquence. And these features have a profound effect on every part of our life with books, whether we are buying them, stealing them or giving them as gifts; carrying them into battle or across the world; attacking, altering or destroying them. Here we see books that are burned, drowned, bound in human skin and made of processed cheese; filled with images of devotion and pasted over with smut; chewed up, put on trial, even saved from the apocalypse.

Smith is inventive in using the experience of her book in our hands to illustrate what she means – hence inviting us to read *Portable Magic* in any order, just like a Choose Your Own Adventure (the subject of Chapter 14). This invitation makes us hyper-aware of how we plot our path through the book, and how our experience will be only one of the myriad possibilities.

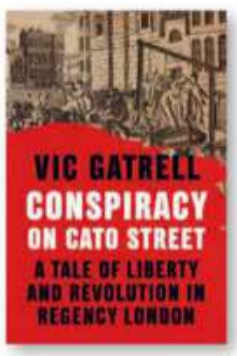
Smith's fun, playful, learned and accessible tome will remind readers of quite how many ways they love their books. H

Edward Wilson-Lee is the author of *The Catalogue of Shipwrecked Books* (William Collins, 2018)

Fiery words
Emma Smith considers anew our relationship with books, covering everything from book burning to volumes bound in human skin

REGENCY

Poverty and plotting



Conspiracy on Cato Street: A Tale of Liberty and Revolution in Regency London
by Vic Gatrell
Cambridge University Press, 474 pages, £25

Anyone who still thinks that the Regency period that largely followed the Napoleonic Wars was a genteel, Jane Austen-infused era of elegance and romance should read this book by Vic Gatrell. As he argues in this definitive study: "Inequality, exploitation, disfranchisement, enclosure, factories, slavery, war, hunger, beggary, hangings, transportation, floggings, bullets, sabres and government repression… were what guaranteed Regency order and enabled the privileged to cavort so stylishly."

The Cato Street conspiracy of February 1820 was the culmination of a series of incidents of unrest caused by unemployment, bad harvests, high prices and starvation following the war. A small group of desperate and deluded men, holed up in a dilapidated stable in Cato Street off London's Edgware Road, planned to assassinate cabinet ministers who, they supposed, were dining in a house on Grosvenor Square. But it was all a set-up fomented by government spies, and the gang was rounded up by the Bow Street Runners, an early police force.

Five of the ringleaders were tried and then publicly hanged at Newgate. Afterwards, to the horror of many, their bodies were cut down and decapitated by axe – the last time such a macabre medieval punishment for treason was inflicted.

The plot has usually been dismissed cursorily by historians of the period as a delusional failure. But Gatrell's intense study of the men's lives – and what brought them to believe that violently overthrowing the government could solve their problems – is forensic and vivid in its detail, drawn from official documents and transcripts: the men seem to speak directly to us. It is clear where his sympathies lie, but that does not blind him to the hopelessness of the men's cause. My only cavil is the poor reproduction of contemporary illustrations. H

Stephen Bates is the author of *1815: Regency Britain in the Year of Waterloo* (Head of Zeus, 2015)

BRIDGEMAN

HISTORY EXTRA MASTERCLASS

Witch-hunting in the Early Modern World

with Malcolm Gaskill

Malcolm Gaskill is emeritus professor of early modern history at the University of East Anglia. A leading expert in the history of witchcraft, his works include the highly acclaimed *Witchfinders: A Seventeenth-Century English Tragedy*. His most recent book, *The Ruin of All Witches*, is a compelling account of a colonial witch-hunt in early 17th-century New England.

This curated five-part virtual lecture series from renowned historian Malcolm Gaskill will explore the fear of witchcraft that gripped the early modern world – its causes and consequences, and the experiences of people caught up in its currents. It will also investigate what these stories tell us about the wider culture and society of a pivotal period.

1. **The Idea of a Witch** – 29 April
2. **Origins and Causes** – 6 May
3. **Prosecutions and Panics** – 13 May
4. **The Experience of Witchcraft** – 20 May
5. **The Decline of Magic** – 27 May

Each lecture starts at 12.30pm BST (7.30am EST)

ALAMY

Each session combines an introductory lecture, extensive Q&A, and discussion of a primary source chosen by Malcolm Gaskill.

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Tickets: £15 per module or £60 for all five modules

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WORDS BY **RHIANNON DAVIES & MATT ELTON**

ELF

ALSO ON THE BOOKSHELF

FRANCE

France: An Adventure History
by Graham Robb
(Picador, 544 pages, £25)

Vive la France

Covering the entire history of France in 544 pages might sound like an impossible task, but Graham Robb's enjoyable romp makes light work of it, surging from the legendary origins of the Gauls to the 21st-century Tour de France, with some unexpected detours along the way. The narrative is interspersed with his own experiences of travelling in France, revealing historical landscapes in a new light.

CULTURAL

Dinner with Joseph Johnson
by Daisy Hay
(Chatto & Windus, 528 pages, £25)

Food for thought

Once a week from the 1770s to 1809, the publisher Joseph Johnson invited friends to his London home for dinner. But the leading lights of the intellectual scene didn't come for the food – often veal and boiled vegetables – but for the vibrant conversation. Chronicling Johnson's fascinating dining companions and the changes that rocked Britain during the period, this is a feast for those interested in the 18th century.

ARCHITECTURE

Iconicon
by John Grindrod
(Faber & Faber, 496 pages, £20)

Bricks and mortar

Which architectural landmarks symbolise modern Britain? Obvious examples might include the Gherkin or the Angel of the North, but John Grindrod makes a convincing claim for the everyday architecture of the past four decades, from skyscrapers to business parks. Packed with anecdotes from residents across the country, *Iconicon* explores how Britain's urban landscapes have evolved in recent times.

SCIENCE

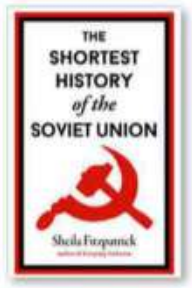
The Matter of Everything
by Suzie Sheehy
(Bloomsbury, 336 pages, £20)

Inquiring minds

The past 130 years have seen a tsunami of scientific breakthroughs that have helped us understand our world, from the accidental discovery of X-rays in 1895 to the race to split the atomic nucleus. Suzie Sheehy revisits 12 pivotal experiments from this span of history that have transformed our understanding of physics and the universe – and the pioneering scientists who made these finds possible.

RUSSIA

The Shortest History of the Soviet Union
by Sheila Fitzpatrick
(Old Street Publishing, 256 pages, £12.99)

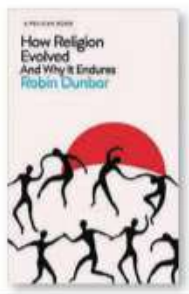


Soviet starter

From its inception, forged in the chaos and violence of the 1917 Russian Revolution, to its final days of disintegration and dissolution, the history of the Soviet Union is complex, tumultuous and fascinating. In light of Russia's recent invasion of Ukraine – and president Vladimir Putin's view of the breakup of the USSR as a tragedy – this concise, incisive introduction is more timely now than ever.

CULTURAL

How Religion Evolved and Why it Endures
by Robin Dunbar
(Pelican, 352 pages, £22)



Keeping the faith

The ways in which humans have attempted to bring meaning to life – often brutal, sometimes joyous, frequently perplexing – by believing in *something* are explored in this engaging book. Robin Dunbar mixes science with history to chart the experiences, beliefs and behaviours that define our relationship with the mystical, aiming to explain why people across the globe have continued to find hope in religious belief.

SOCIAL

The Premonitions Bureau: A True Story
by Sam Knight
(Faber & Faber, 256 pages, £14.99)

Fringe science

Ever had that eerie feeling of knowing something was going to happen before it did? In the 1960s, psychiatrist John Barker set out to discover if there was any genuine basis for that feeling and, if so, whether it could be harnessed to alert us to future disaster. Such ambitions might sound like something from *The X-Files* but, as this dynamic history shows, they reveal a lot about how we make sense of our own minds.

CULTURAL

The Penguin Book of Dragons
edited by Scott G Bruce
(Penguin Classics, 320 pages, £12.99)

Twisted firestarters

Dragons are coiled around centuries of human history, rather like JRR Tolkien's Smaug around its pile of treasure. This edited collection gathers together excerpts from stories, epic poems and adventurers' journals to chronicle some of the ways in which these menacing, fantastical creatures have been a constant presence in our imaginations – and represented society's hopes and fears. H

High society
Downton Abbey is back for its second big-screen outing, and this time the Crawleys are swapping their country pile for the French Riviera

WATCH

Imperious and mysterious

Of all the characters in *Downton Abbey*, Violet Crawley, Dowager Countess of Grantham, has always appeared to be the most likely to harbour secrets – if only because she's so formidable that you would hesitate to ask her anything of a remotely personal nature. And to judge by trailers for the second big-screen outing for the Crawleys and their retainers, Violet (Maggie Smith) is a woman with a past.

How else to explain the fact she has inherited a villa in the south of France, seemingly from a man she knew before she got hitched to her late husband, Patrick Crawley, the 6th Earl of Grantham?

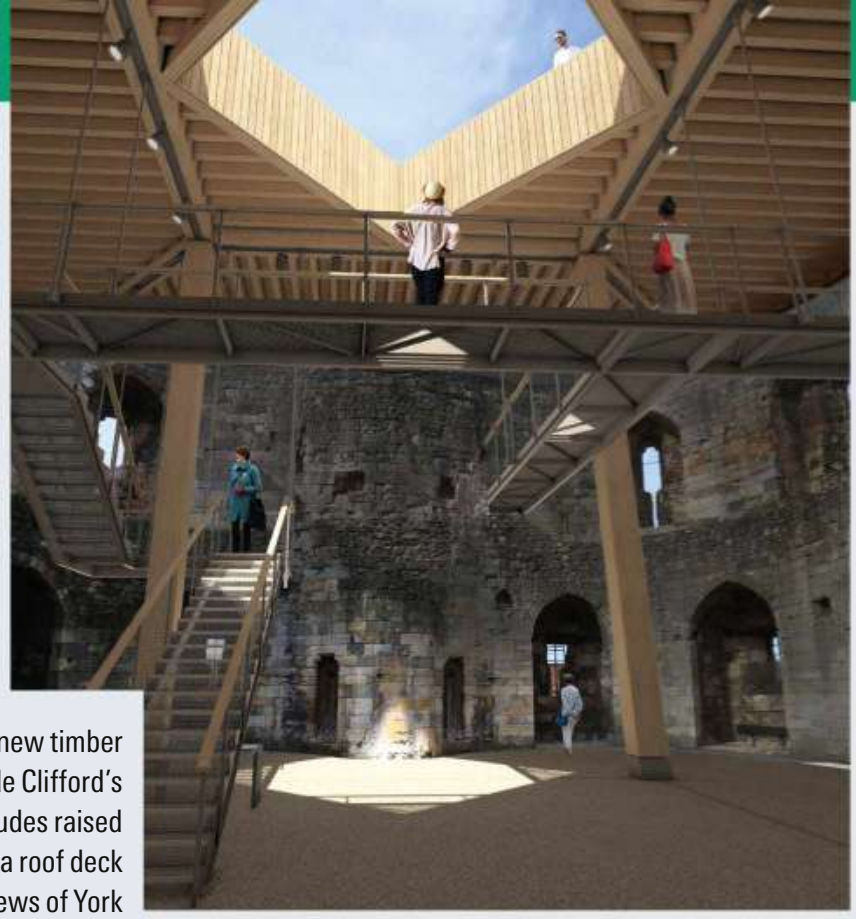
The Crawleys decamp to the Riviera, a journey that's in part a holiday, but also seems a way to avoid a noisy film crew that is making a movie at the family pile. Alongside returning faces, new additions to the cast include Dominic West, who plays actor Guy Dexter. *Downton* creator Julian Fellowes provides the script, while the film is directed by Simon Curtis, whose credits include *My Week With Marilyn* (2011).

Downton Abbey: A New Era
In cinemas from Friday 29 April

ALAMY

ENCOUNTERS

DIARY: VISIT / WATCH / LISTEN / TASTE
By **Jonathan Wright, Samantha Nott** and **Rhiannon Davies**
92 EXPLORE... Pollok House, Glasgow
94 TRAVEL... Casablanca, Morocco



A rendering of the new timber structure inside Clifford's Tower, which includes raised walkways and a roof deck with stunning views of York

VISIT

Walking in history

Clifford's Tower has been a prominent part of York's skyline for the past 800 years, but time has not been kind to it. Ravaged by fire in 1684, it has stood as a shell of its former glory for centuries.

Following a £5m restoration project by English Heritage, Clifford's Tower is reopening, with a new 10-metre wooden structure providing stunning views over the city. Visitors can delve deeper into the tower's remarkable history as one of the few surviving remnants of York Castle, including the notorious 1190 massacre of the city's Jews and its role in the Civil War of the 17th century.

Clifford's Tower, York
Open from 2 April / Booking recommended / *english-heritage.org.uk*

LISTEN

How we got to now

Those born in 1992 – the year John Major stood on a soapbox to win an unexpected general election – turn 30 this year. The decade of Cool Britannia, the rise of no-frills airlines and the splintering of the Soviet Union is receding into the rearview mirror.

But to what extent do we understand how the nineties shaped our current world of Brexit, conflict in Europe and arguments over cancel culture? Not as well as we might, suggests a 10-part weekday series, which sets about exploring the ways key moments from the 1990s reverberate today. The series is presented by Robert Carlyle, who played the role of Begbie in one of the decade's defining movies, *Trainspotting*.

What Really Happened in the Nineties
BBC Radio 4 / Weekdays from Monday 25 April

Robert Carlyle (right, as Begbie in *Trainspotting*) presents a 10-part series on the nineties and how it has shaped our current world

Robert Maxwell and his daughter Ghislaine in 1984. A new series traces the family's rise and fall

WATCH

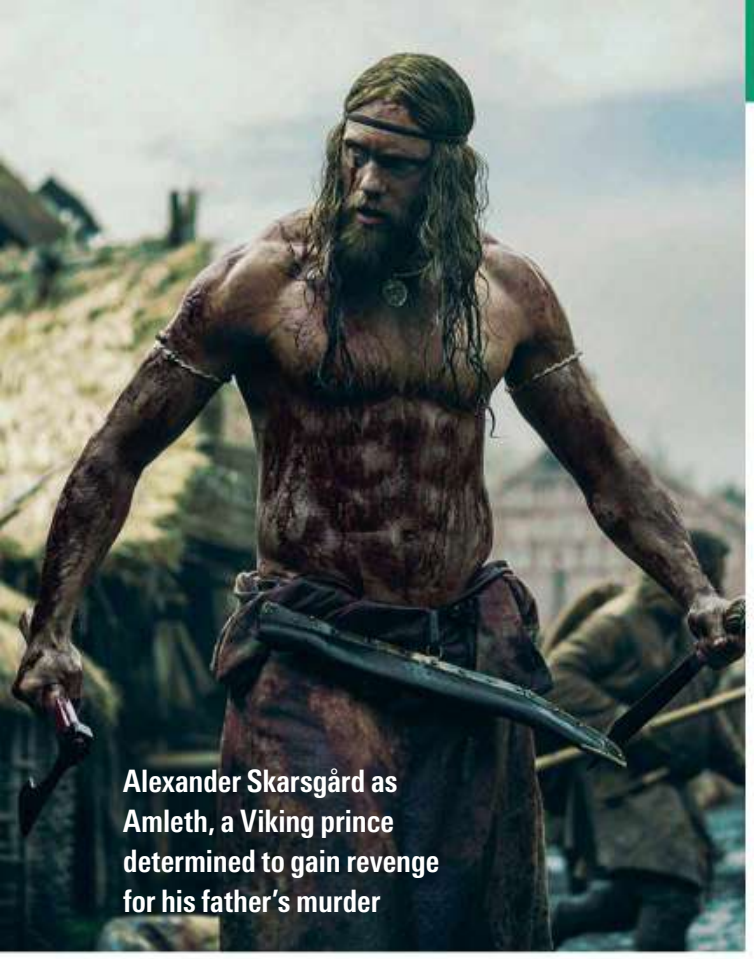
Money, power and corruption

In 2021 Ghislaine Maxwell was convicted of grooming and trafficking underage girls. But how did she become such a key figure in the twisted world of Jeffrey Epstein? To understand what happened, you need to consider Ghislaine's family background, a new documentary series argues. To help us do so, it uses first-hand testimony, including a survivor speaking for the first time about their experience.

Central to the story is Robert Maxwell. Born in Czechoslovakia in 1923, he lost most of his family in the Holocaust. After the Second World War, he built a life in Britain and, in 1984, acquired Mirror Group Newspapers. But on his death in 1991, it became clear he had stolen millions from his companies' pension funds.

The House of Maxwell
BBC Two & BBC iPlayer / April

GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY/ENGLISH HERITAGE



Alexander Skarsgård as Amleth, a Viking prince determined to gain revenge for his father's murder

WATCH

There will be blood…

It might have provided inspiration for Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, but the story of Amleth dates back much further: at least to the medieval era, and perhaps even further to an Old Icelandic poem lost to the past. But whatever its provenance, it's a blood-soaked tale of revenge and madness – precisely the kind of story to attract the attention of director Robert Eggers, known for his horror films *The Witch* (2015) and *The Lighthouse* (2019).

Eggers' third feature, *The Northman*, stars Alexander Skarsgård as Amleth, a Viking prince whose father is savagely murdered by his uncle. The actor apparently committed to a high-protein diet and intensive exercise regimen to put on 20 pounds of muscle for a part that requires much toplessness, swordplay and the smiting of enemies as Amleth plots to restore his fortunes.

The supporting cast is impressively starry, including Nicole Kidman, Ethan Hawke, Willem Dafoe and, as a seeress, the singer Björk. The Icelandic poet and novelist Sjón co-wrote the script with Eggers, while Neil Price, a professor in the department of Archaeology and Ancient History at Uppsala University, Sweden, acted as historical consultant.

The Northman
In cinemas from Friday 15 April

WEEKLY TV & RADIO
Visit **historyextra.com** for weekly updates on upcoming television and radio programmes

ALAMY/BBC

"Notre-Dame is like a wounded old lady learning to walk again, and that's beautiful to see"

LUCY WORSLEY tells us about her new documentary on Notre-Dame Cathedral's grand rebuild, and the fascinating historical secrets the fire has unearthed

Can you remember how you felt when you saw the first reports of the blaze engulfing Notre-Dame in 2019?
I remember exactly where I was when Notre-Dame burned: preparing for a journey to France, where I was going to spend time at the palace of Versailles! Arriving in Paris, I could smell the burning in the air while changing metros.

I felt my own sadness at the loss of a place I'd loved since my first visit as a teenager on a French exchange programme. But what really overwhelmed me was the intensity of other people's emotions, not only in France, but all around the world. I hadn't understood exactly what the cathedral meant, and why so many people cared so much.

In 2022, what's the scene that greets you when you visit the site?
Going to Notre-Dame today is nothing short of an ordeal: you have to attend safety training and then get completely kitted up in safety gear. The biggest danger is getting contaminated by the lead from the cathedral's roof, which melted and spread across the whole interior. When you leave the building site, you have to take off all your clothes and exit through a shower.

Inside the cathedral at the moment is rather like being in a space ship: a huge, dark, cold, clanking space, with machines and people in strange safety suits moving slowly about. Until, that is, you climb up to the top of the scaffolding. If the great removable temporary roof happens to be slid open, you can then experience views of Paris unseen by human eyes since those of the 12th-century workmen who built it in the first place.

What kinds of discoveries have been made by researchers and scientists?
The silver lining of the fire was the chance it has given to scientists to get up close to the fabric of the cathedral and study it. I spent time with the experts in medieval stained glass, for example, who have been recording exactly how 19th-century architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc redesigned the medieval rose windows. They're also able to look with new understanding at the incredible archive of beautiful drawings that Viollet-le-Duc left, recording the medieval cathedral he found, and planning his 19th-century remodelling.

What's the atmosphere like at the site?
The cathedral herself is like a wounded old lady learning to walk again, and that's beautiful to see. And so too is the spectacle of so many hundreds of committed people working together on a common goal. H

Rebuilding Notre-Dame II (title TBC) is due to be broadcast on BBC Two in mid-late April

Lucy Worsley stands in front of scaffolding inside Notre-Dame Cathedral. The rebuilding efforts are the focus of her new documentary

This sweetened alcoholic concoction can be served as a drink or a dessert sauce

TASTE

Caudle

This hot drink has been a staple of British diets for centuries, appearing in various forms from the medieval period to the Victorian era. Caudle (or caudel) was a sweetened alcoholic concoction, seen as particularly suitable for lending strength to people recovering from sickness. It was also given to new mothers – traditionally the drink was offered to them and their female visitors during the "lying-in" period after labour. Recipes changed over the centuries, with some versions using milk and eggs to make a drink similar to eggnog, and later iterations being more akin to a drinkable gruel.

Difficulty: 1/10 **Time:** 15 mins

INGREDIENTS

5 egg yolks
⅔ cup of white wine
Sugar to taste (This will depend on the wine you use – inexpensive sweet wines seem to work best.)
A pinch of saffron

METHOD

1. In a bowl, beat together the egg yolks, wine, sugar and saffron.
2. Heat the mixture over a medium flame, stirring continually, until the caudle is hot and has a thick and fluffy consistency. Be careful to not let it burn or scorch, or stick to the pan.
3. Serve immediately, either in small glasses as a drink, or as a sauce to pour over desserts.

Recipe: Gode Cookery, godecookery.com

VISIT

A family in focus

The Windsors are among the most photographed families in the world, with paparazzi and royal photographers alike clamouring to get them in the frame.

The complex relationship between British royalty and the camera is the subject of a new exhibition at Kensington Palace, which features some of the most iconic photographs of the royal family.

Stretching back to the reign of Queen Victoria, the display puts formal portraits and relaxed images of domestic life on show together. Highlights include a black-and-white photograph of Diana, Princess of Wales, taken by David Bailey in 1988 – and never before shown in public – as well as intimate shots taken by members of the royal family themselves.

Conservators hang a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II. The Kensington Palace display brings together official portraits and intimate scenes of royal life

Life Through a Royal Lens
Kensington Palace, London / Until 30 October / Booking recommended / *hrp.org.uk*

The letters of Agnes Keith, Countess of Moray, are dissected in *Time Travels*

ALAMY/HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES

LISTEN

Writing for posterity

In the digital age, content produced by the BBC across the UK, far from Broadcasting House W1A, is now more easily accessible to a wider audience. *Time Travels* is a case in point. A Scottish social history series, it consistently highlights stories that deserve a wider audience.

In the latest shows, for example, one episode looks at the work of Dr Jade Scott, who is making a database of letters written by Scottish women from 1450 to 1625. Among them is a missive from Agnes Keith, Countess of Moray. Widowed and considering the future for her daughters, she writes to Queen Elizabeth I to try to curry favour. Mary, Queen of Scot's jewels feature in the correspondence.

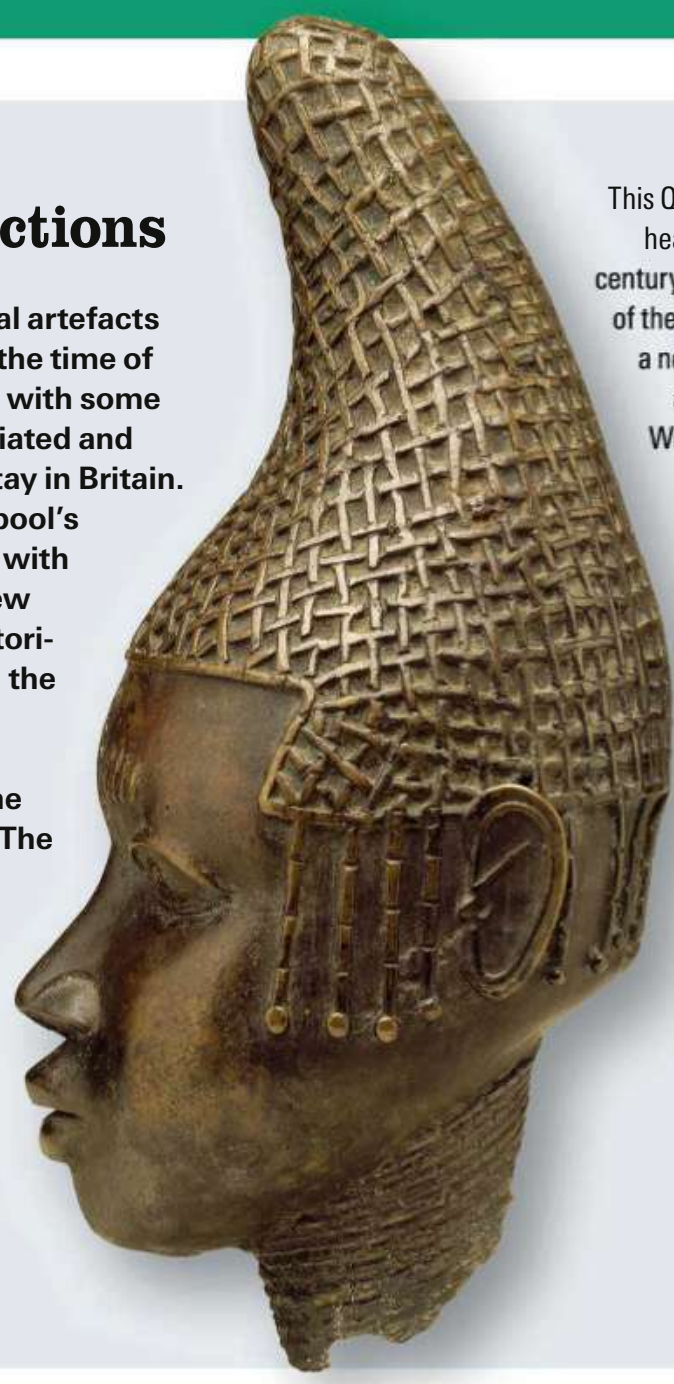
Time Travels
BBC Radio Scotland & Sounds / Saturday 16 April

VISIT

Colonial connections

Debates surrounding cultural artefacts looted by the British during the time of empire are currently raging, with some calling for them to be repatriated and others saying they should stay in Britain.

National Museums Liverpool's World Museum is engaging with this discussion with their new display. Illuminating the historical links between Benin and the British maritime city, the exhibition also explores the legacy of imperialism and the violence associated with it. The curators worked with five Liverpool residents of African heritage to amplify their voices, reshaping the narrative of the museum's colonial collections.



This Queen Mother head from 16th-century Benin is one of the highlights of a new exhibition at Liverpool's World Museum

Benin and Liverpool

World Museum, Liverpool / Open now / *liverpoolmuseums.org.uk*

WATCH

Conserving the past

Secrets of the Museum was a series that arrived on our screens shortly before the very first lockdown back in 2020. Part of the reason for the success of the show, which goes behind the scenes at the V&A, was that it offered a reminder of the halcyon days when we could all get out to our favourite galleries and see exhibitions without worrying about Covid-19.

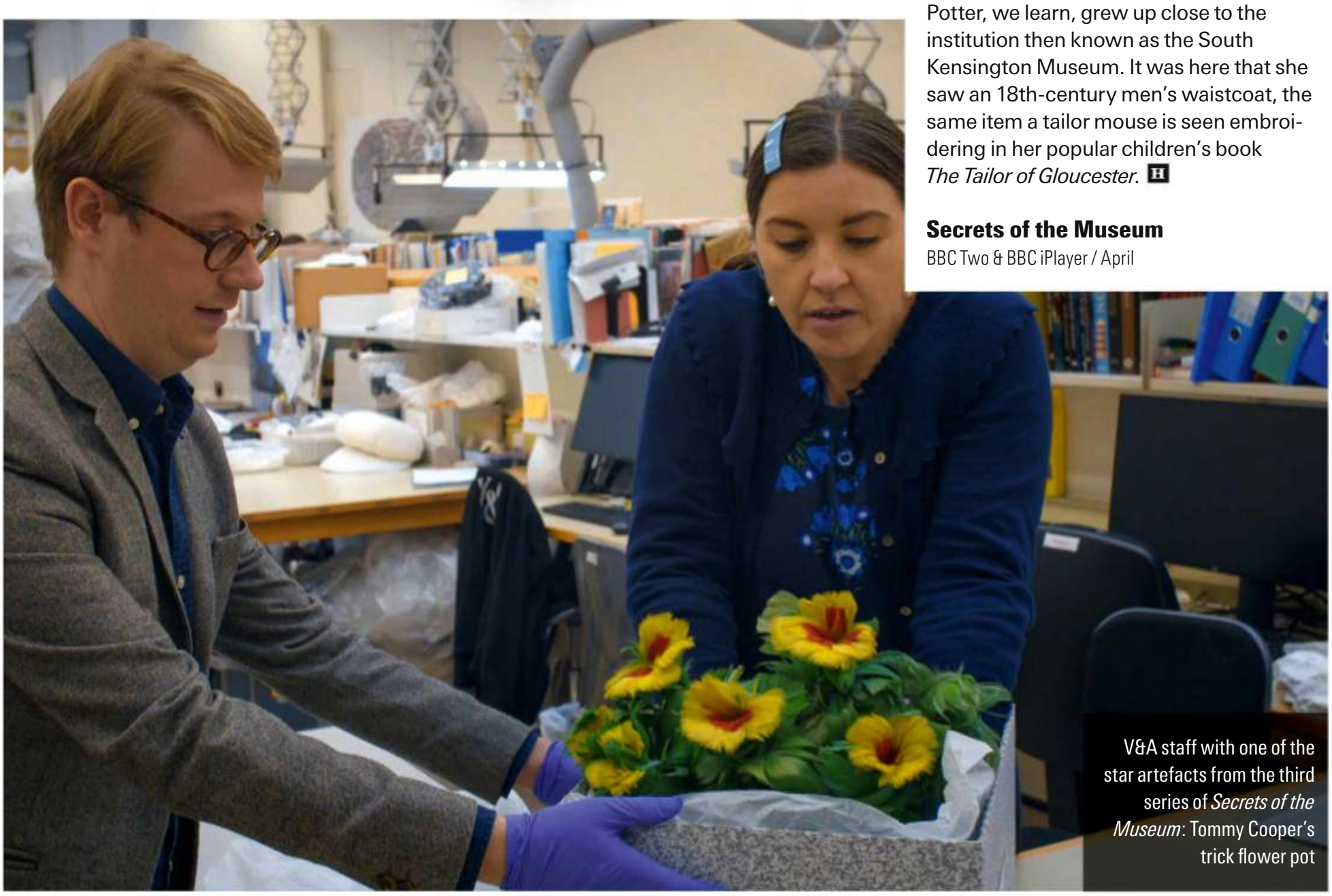
But there was another reason too: the work of curators and craftspeople might be utterly fascinating, but it's often hidden behind the glitz and glamour of the gallery walls. Here is a programme that pulls back the curtain to offer a glimpse into that world – and it's back again for a third series.

This new offering doesn't mess around with the *Secrets* formula a great deal, but why would it? In the new series, we're promised the story of how the V&A puts the largest object it has ever acquired – a section of the Robin Hood Gardens Estate – out for view; unexpected tales around objects in its Scottish collection; and even insights into the magic tricks of British comedian Tommy Cooper.

The series also explores how objects in the V&A influence popular culture. Beatrix Potter, we learn, grew up close to the institution then known as the South Kensington Museum. It was here that she saw an 18th-century men's waistcoat, the same item a tailor mouse is seen embroidering in her popular children's book *The Tailor of Gloucester*.

Secrets of the Museum

BBC Two & BBC iPlayer / April



V&A staff with one of the star artefacts from the third series of *Secrets of the Museum*: Tommy Cooper's trick flower pot

LIVERPOOL MUSEUMS/BBC

A home for heritage

Amid a verdant estate in suburban Glasgow stands a glorious Georgian mansion where the seeds of the National Trust for Scotland were sown. **BRIANNA ROBERTSON-KIRKLAND** explores the long history and spectacular art collections of Pollok House

With scenic trails, manicured gardens and fluffy Highland cows, the Old Pollok Estate is an idyllic haven. Now preserved as Pollok Country Park, it's just 20 minutes from the hustle and bustle of Glasgow city centre. Wandering around the estate really feels like taking a step back in time – which is fitting, because scenes in the hit television series *Outlander* were filmed here. At its heart stands Pollok House, an elegant Georgian mansion that has hosted a glittering array of visitors over the years, including, in 1859, Queen Victoria's beloved Prince Albert.

The Old Pollok Estate is the ancestral home of the Maxwell family, who have lived in the area since 1269. They can trace their origins back further still to the Norman conquest, when the Saxon chief Maccus pledged his allegiance to the Scots and settled near a pool or "well" on the river Tweed. The origin of Maxwell – thought to be a corruption of Maccus Well – directly references this ancient heritage. By the 13th century, the family had accumulated large parcels of land south of the river Clyde, including Pollok, and in 1630 they were granted a baronetcy by Charles I.

Pollok House was the third home built by the Maxwell family. Their second, Haggs Castle, a 16th-century tower house north-east of the estate, still stands to this day and is now a private residence. By the 18th century, the family were looking to create a more modern and luxurious home. Commissioned in 1747 and completed in 1752, Pollok House was relatively modest, with only four public rooms on the ground floor. They were, though, beautifully decorated with elaborate Georgian stucco that can still be admired throughout the property.

The Maxwells continued to live at Pollok House until 1865, when the baronetcy was passed to William Stirling of Keir, a renowned academic with a vast collection of Spanish art. However, he never lived at Pollok, and the house remained empty until his son, Sir John Stirling Maxwell, inherited it in 1887.

Sir John quickly set about modernising and expanding the property, building a water turbine on the nearby river Cart (also known as White Cart Water) to supply electricity to the house. Much of his father's collection of Spanish art was put on display, including several portraits of the Spanish Habsburg monarchs. Also of note is a portrait of Clement VII, the pope who famously refused to grant Henry VIII a divorce from Catherine of Aragon. The Stirling Maxwell art collection still adorns the walls of Pollok House today.

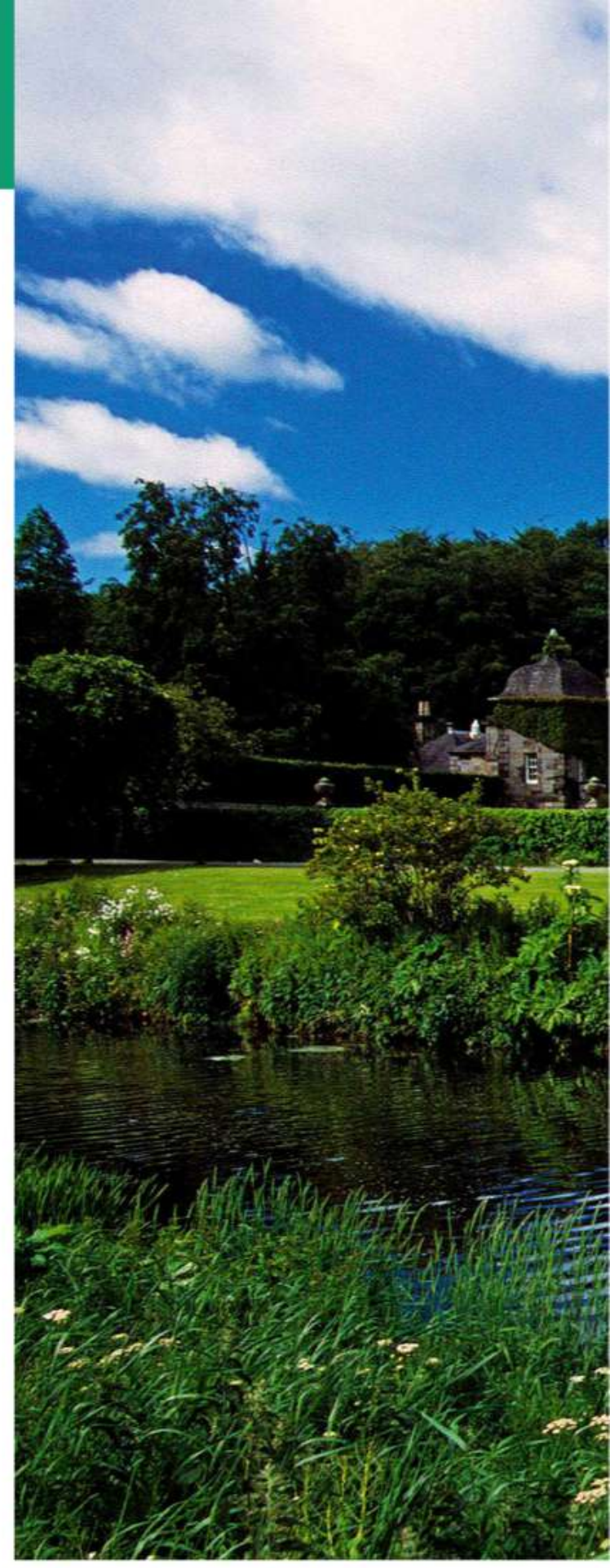
Throughout his life, Sir John took a leading role in improving and promoting his country's industry and history. Recognising a need to preserve Scotland's countryside and architectural heritage, it was in his smoking room at Pollok House – a space that still retains a musty whiff of tobacco – that Sir John formally discussed establishing an organisation that could care for "Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty".

Following Sir John's prompting, the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) was founded in 1931, and he gifted the organisation Crookston Castle – less than 2 miles west of Pollok – as its first property. Pollok House also came into NTS care in 1998, though the Maxwells maintain a private residence in this treasure trove of history and artwork, which is open all year round. H

"The Maxwell family can trace their origins back to the Norman conquest, when the Saxon chief Maccus pledged allegiance to the Scots"

Brianna Robertson-Kirkland is a research associate at the University of Glasgow, and lecturer in historical musicology at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

VISIT For more information on visiting Pollok House, go to **nts.org.uk/pollok-house**



The Old Pollok Estate encompasses a beautiful maze garden as well as extensive parkland

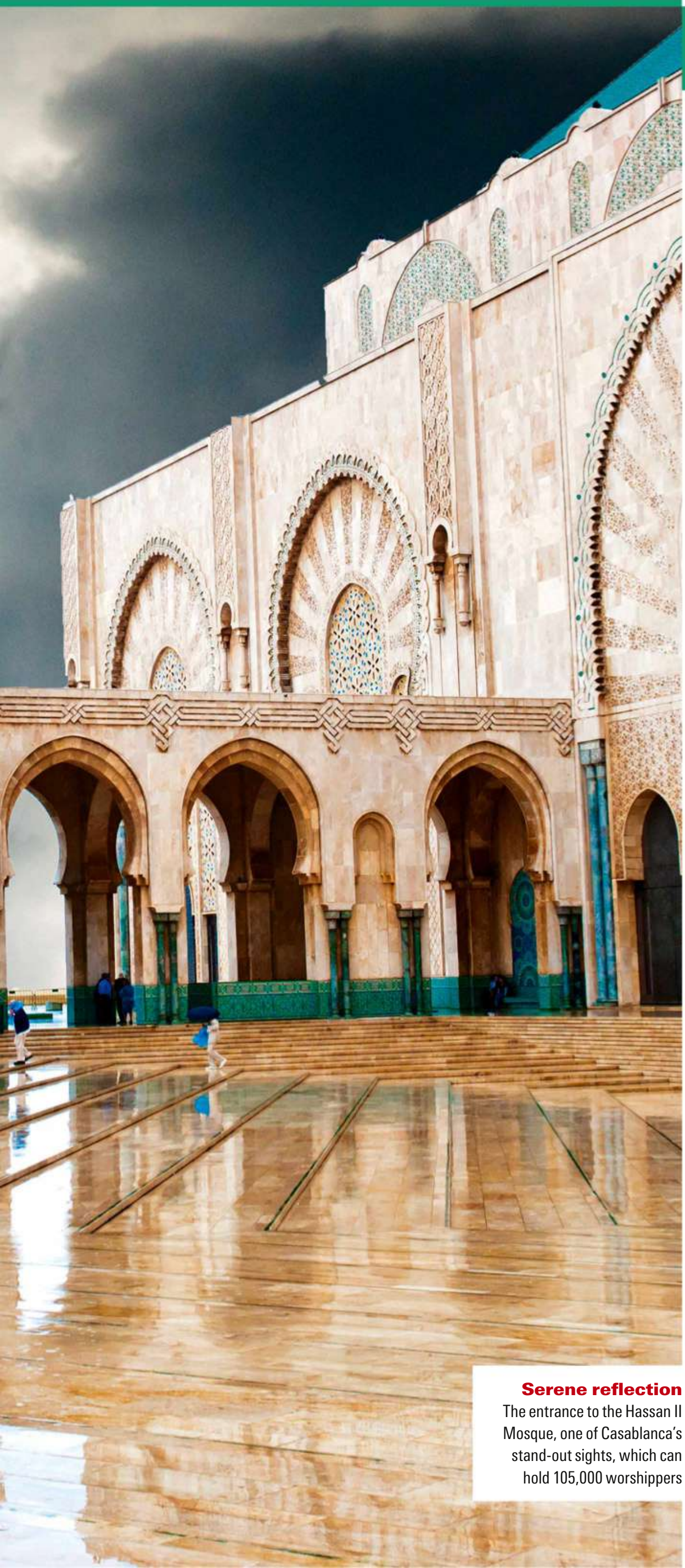
The picturesque Georgian mansion of Pollok House, which was completed in 1752

The Music Room at Pollok House displays part of Sir William Stirling Maxwell's exceptional art collection

Ornate stucco adorns the drawing room at Pollok House, where the idea of a National Trust for Scotland was mooted

ALAMY/NATIONAL TRUST SCOTLAND

"Casablanca is Morocco's biggest city and a worthy rival to the capital, Rabat"



DREAMSTIME

Serene reflection
The entrance to the Hassan II Mosque, one of Casablanca's stand-out sights, which can hold 105,000 worshippers

Morocco's melting pot

Casablanca is a worthy rival to the Moroccan capital, Rabat, which lies only 55 miles along the coast. The country's biggest city, with a population of over 3 million, is its largest financial and industrial centre and, though the title is fiercely contested, Casablanca is also home to Morocco's best and most international eating scene.

With its sense of modernity and seemingly endless construction, Casablanca doesn't have the same timeless atmosphere as Morocco's ancient imperial cities such as Marrakesh and Fez. However, a visit here provides the opportunity to discover the more recent history of this most fascinating destination – without being swamped by tourist crowds.

The stand-out sights are religious: the towering Hassan II Mosque and the former Cathédrale (or Église) du Sacré-Cœur, now reborn as a cultural centre. Inevitably – and irresistibly – Casablanca is home to a recreation of Rick's Cafe, immortalised by that famous 1942 movie starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman.

Away from tinkling ivories and wartime drama, you'll find unique museums devoted to Moroccan Judaism and the country's artistic tradition – the latter celebrated at the Abderrahman Slaoui Foundation Museum. A walking tour of Casablanca's art-deco treasure trove of French colonial buildings is another unusual experience in a country better known for chaotic medinas (old walled cities) and desert scenery.

As you might expect in a city with a fine Atlantic seafront, local life often gravitates towards the beach. The Aïn Diab neighbourhood is home to Casablanca's waterfront promenade and the famous Le Cabestan restaurant.

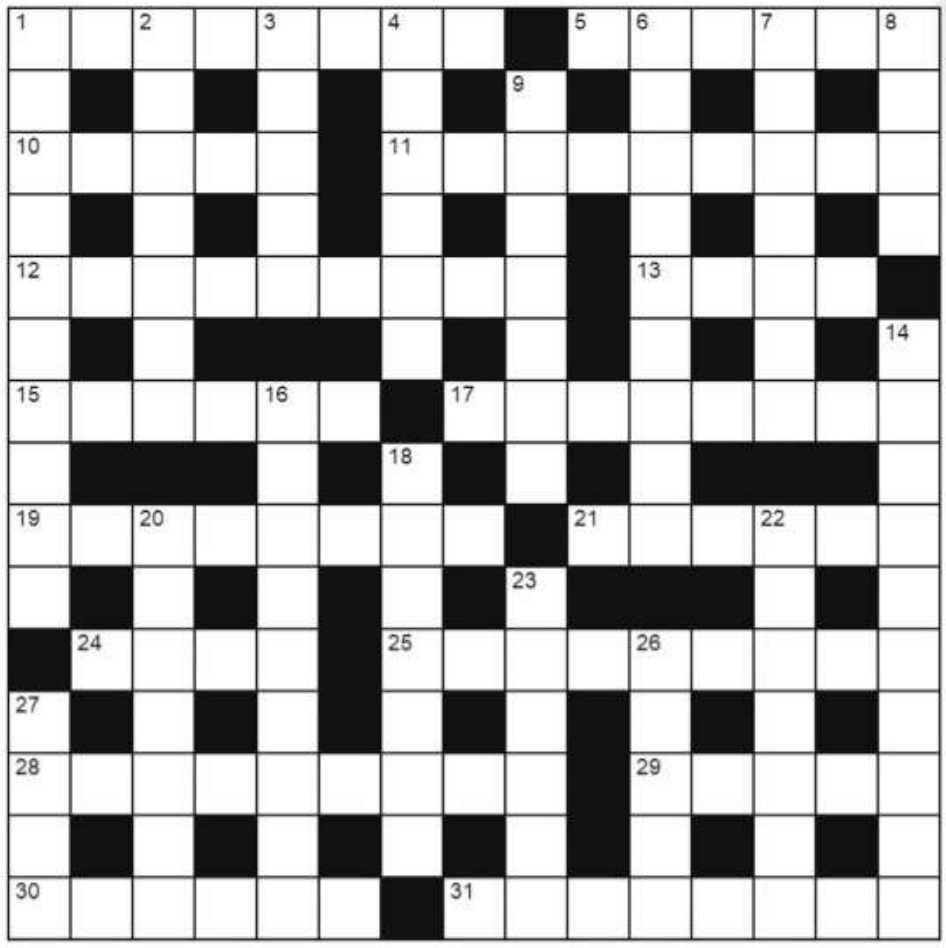
The post-pandemic recovery in Casablanca looks set to build momentum throughout 2022. The dramatic Grand Théâtre de Casablanca is primed to open later this year or early in 2023, and more air routes are opening up, with several direct links from the UK.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

- Another unusual destination that mixes Islamic influences with modern development is **Muscat, Oman**.
- For a more traditional take on Moroccan seaside life, head farther down the coast to the city of **Essaouira**.

By **Tom Hall**, travel writer and author of *Lonely Planet's Guide to Train Travel in Europe*

PRIZE CROSSWORD



Across

1 Liberal politician, one-time prime minister whose position on eg Irish Home Rule later kept him out of the Liberal government (8)
5 Vasco Nunez de ____, the conquistador and leader of the first European expedition to reach the Pacific from the New World (6)
10/23 Historian, *BBC History Magazine* contributor and author of *Elizabeth's Women* (5,6)
11 The wing commander who led the 617 Squadron on the "Dam Busters" raid in 1943 (3,6)
12 Ernest Shackleton's ship, crushed by ice on his 1914–16 Antarctic expedition (9)
13 Great ____, the migration undertaken by Afrikaners escaping British control in South Africa (4)
15 John ____, the English Catholic martyr hanged for treason in 1570; or the naval officer who assassinated the 1st Duke of Buckingham in 1628 (6)
17 Name applied to British defensive towers built in the Napoleonic Wars (8)
19 Brothers Nello and Carlo ____, the Italian socialists murdered by rightwing militants in France in 1937 (8)
21 The Treaty of ____(1920) effectively marked the ending of the Ottoman empire (6)
24 Major battle of the Crimean War, the first engagement between Anglo-French forces and Russian defenders (4)
25 The world leader who was given the honorific title of the Great Helmsman (3,6)
28 It replaced the Soviet Union's Politburo between 1952 and 1966 (9)
29 Surname of British politician killed by an Irish terrorist bomb in 1979 (5)
30 This town's 13th-century, Unesco-listed cathedral is the largest Gothic cathedral in France (6)
31 Cheshire location of a Boat Lift, originally opened in 1875 and now a major tourist attraction (8)

Down

1 Ernest ____, British physicist born in New Zealand, winner of the Nobel Prize (1908) (10)
2 Eg the Watergate ____, prompted by the break-in at the HQ of the Democrat National Committee in 1972 (7)

This composer was rumoured to have poisoned Mozart *(20 down)*

3 A member of the highest rank of medieval Russian, etc, society and state administration (5)
4 The role of Louise of Savoy, on behalf of her son Francis I (6)
6 One of the great ancient Greek philosophers, who has been called the "father of logic" (9)
7 Surname of Scottish writer renowned for his biography of diarist Samuel Johnson (7)
8 Indigenous people of the Hokkaido, Sakhalin and Kuril islands, displaced in the late 1800s by Japan (4)
9 A major city of ancient Greece and, according to legend, King Agamemnon's capital (7)
14 Scene of a major land engagement of the Falklands War at the end of May 1982 (5,5)
16 ____Barbarossa, code name for the German invasion of the Soviet Union launched in 1941 (9)
18 Viscount Montgomery of ____, title taken from a north African battle location (7)
20 It was once rumoured that this Italian composer had poisoned Mozart (7)
22 Legislation of 1714, against an "unruly assembly" of people, not repealed until 1973 (4,3)
23 See 10 across
26 Acronym of the selection machine used for the alternative savings scheme launched in the UK in 1956 (5)
27 Angolan political party, in power since the country's independence in 1975 (4)

Compiled by **Eddie James**

Book worth **£25** for **4 winners**

España: A Brief History of Spain

By Giles Tremlett

In his latest book, Giles Tremlett traces Spain's complex history from the prehistoric era right up to the 21st century. Aimed at curious visitors and hispanophiles alike, this accessible trot through the country's history covers everything from Spain's connections to the ancient empires of Rome and Byzantium, to its colonisation of swathes of the Americas.

HOW TO ENTER

● Open to residents of the UK (& Channel Islands). Post entries to ***BBC History Magazine*, May 2022 Crossword, PO Box 501, Leicester LE94 0AA** or email them to ***may2022@historycomps.co.uk*** by 5pm on **11 May 2022**. ● Entrants must supply full name, address and phone number. The winners will be the first correct entries drawn at random after the closing time. Winners' names will appear in the July 2022 issue. By entering, participants agree to be bound by the terms and conditions shown in full in the box below. Immediate Media Company Ltd (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) will use personal details in accordance with the Immediate Privacy Policy at *https://policies.immediate.co.uk/privacy* ● Immediate Media Company Ltd (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) would love to send you newsletters, together with special offers and other promotions. If you would not like to receive these, please write 'NO INFO' on your entry.
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Solution to our March 2022 crossword

Across 1 Jahangir 5 Graham 10 Dinky 11 Lindbergh 12 Epidaurus 14 Sadat 15 Utopia 16 Okinawa 19 Pharaoh 21 Africa 23 Clare 25 Rhineland 26 Roosevelt 27 Biggs 28 Sparta 29 Franklin
Down 1 Judaea 2 Henrietta 3 Ney 4 Illyria 6 Robespierre 7 Herod 8 Mahatma 9 UNESCO 13 Appeasement 17 Archangel 18 Epicurus 20 Harvey 21 Aviator 22 Edison 24 Adowa 27 Bon

Four winners of *The Dark Queens*

H Anstey, Norfolk; A Smith, Leicestershire; D Smale, Scottish Borders; D Bateson, Gloucestershire

CROSSWORD COMPETITION TERMS & CONDITIONS

● The crossword competition is open to all residents of the UK (& Channel Islands), aged 18 or over, except Immediate Media Company London Limited employees or contractors, and anyone connected with the competition or their direct family members. By entering, participants agree to be bound by these terms and conditions and that their name and county may be released if they win. Only one entry permitted per person. ● The closing date and time is as shown under How to Enter, above. Entries received after that will not be considered. Entries cannot be returned. Entrants must supply full name, address and daytime phone number. Immediate Media Company (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) will not publish your personal details or provide them to anyone without permission. Read more about the Immediate Privacy Policy at *immediatemedia.co.uk/privacy-policy/* ● The winning entrants will be the first correct entries drawn at random after the closing time. The prize and number of winners will be as shown on the Crossword page. There is no cash alternative and the prize will not be transferable. Immediate Media Company London Limited's decision is final and no correspondence relating to the competition will be entered into. The winners will be notified by post within 20 days of the close of the competition. The name and county of residence of the winners will be published in the magazine within two months of the closing date. If the winner is unable to be contacted within one month of the closing date, Immediate Media Company London Limited reserves the right to offer the prize to a runner-up. ● Immediate Media Company London Limited reserves the right to amend these terms and conditions, or to cancel, alter or amend the promotion at any stage, if deemed necessary in its opinion, or if circumstances arise outside of its control. The promotion is subject to the laws of England.

GETTY IMAGES

Here's a selection of the exciting content that's coming up on our website **historyextra.com**

Stalin's famine: the Holodomor in Soviet Ukraine

Historian Serhy Yekelchyk describes the events of the Holodomor, or "murder by starvation", a state-engineered famine in Soviet Ukraine in 1932–33 which killed an estimated 3.9 million people.

historyextra.com/holodomor

Five female inventors you should know about

From the little-known creator of the chocolate chip cookie, to the actor who helped develop a radio guidance system for torpedoes, Rachel Dinning tells the stories of five notable female inventors and their creations.

historyextra.com/women-inventors

Bridgerton: the real history on screen

Is your knowledge of Regency history up to scratch? As the opulent world of *Bridgerton* returns to our screens, we present a guide to the snippets of Georgian detail that you might spot on the show.

historyextra.com/bridgerton-history

Newsletters

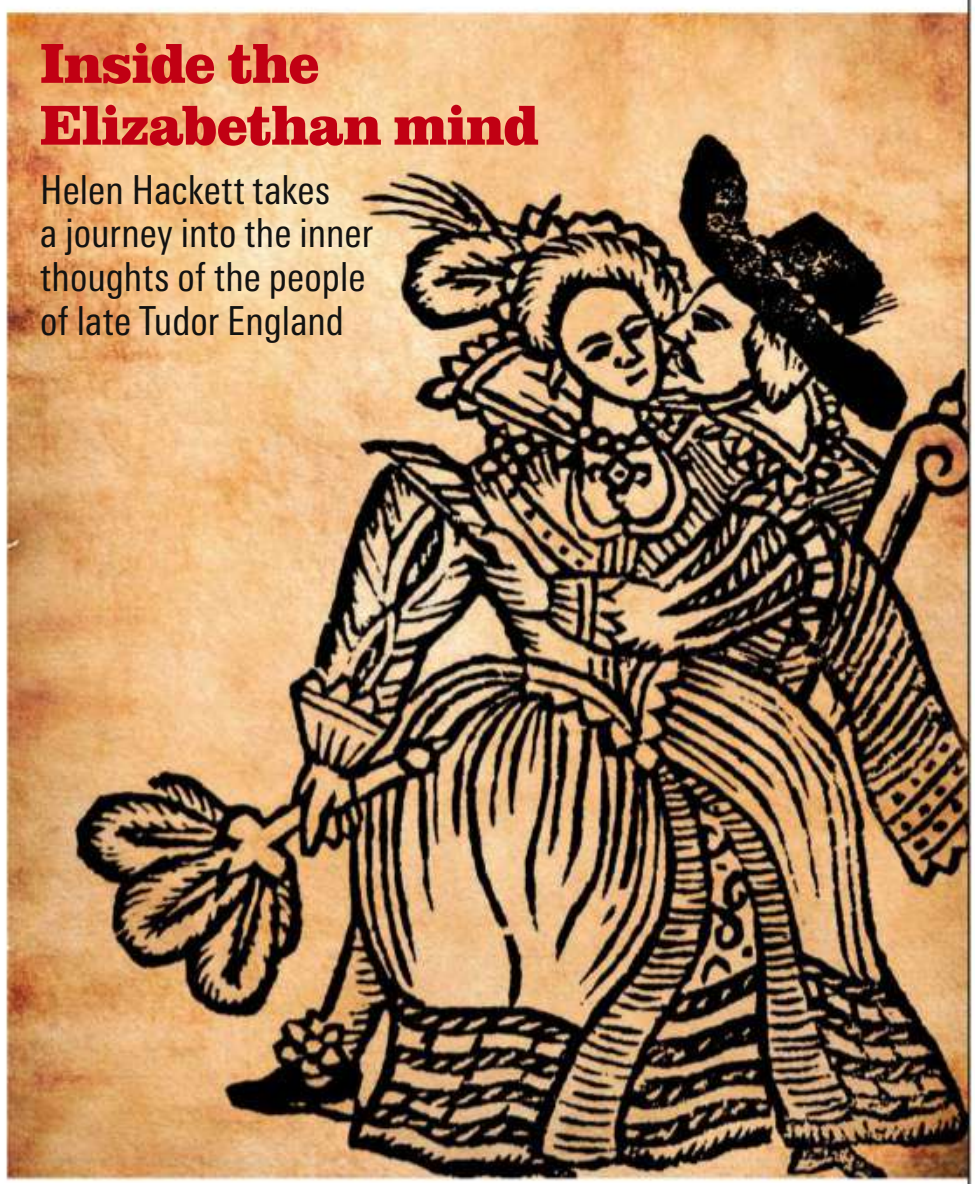
We've recently launched several themed newsletters bringing you the latest developments in some of the most popular periods of the past. Sign up to receive regular updates of historical news, as well as details of the new articles, podcasts and videos that are available on our website.

historyextra.com/newsletters

AKG-IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY/ NETFLIX

NEXT MONTH

June issue on sale 12 May 2022



Inside the Elizabethan mind

Helen Hackett takes a journey into the inner thoughts of the people of late Tudor England

Under siege

Jessie Childs explains how siege warfare played a critical role in the Civil War

Plague science

Monica Green shares the latest research into the origins and transmission of the Black Death

Royal jubilees

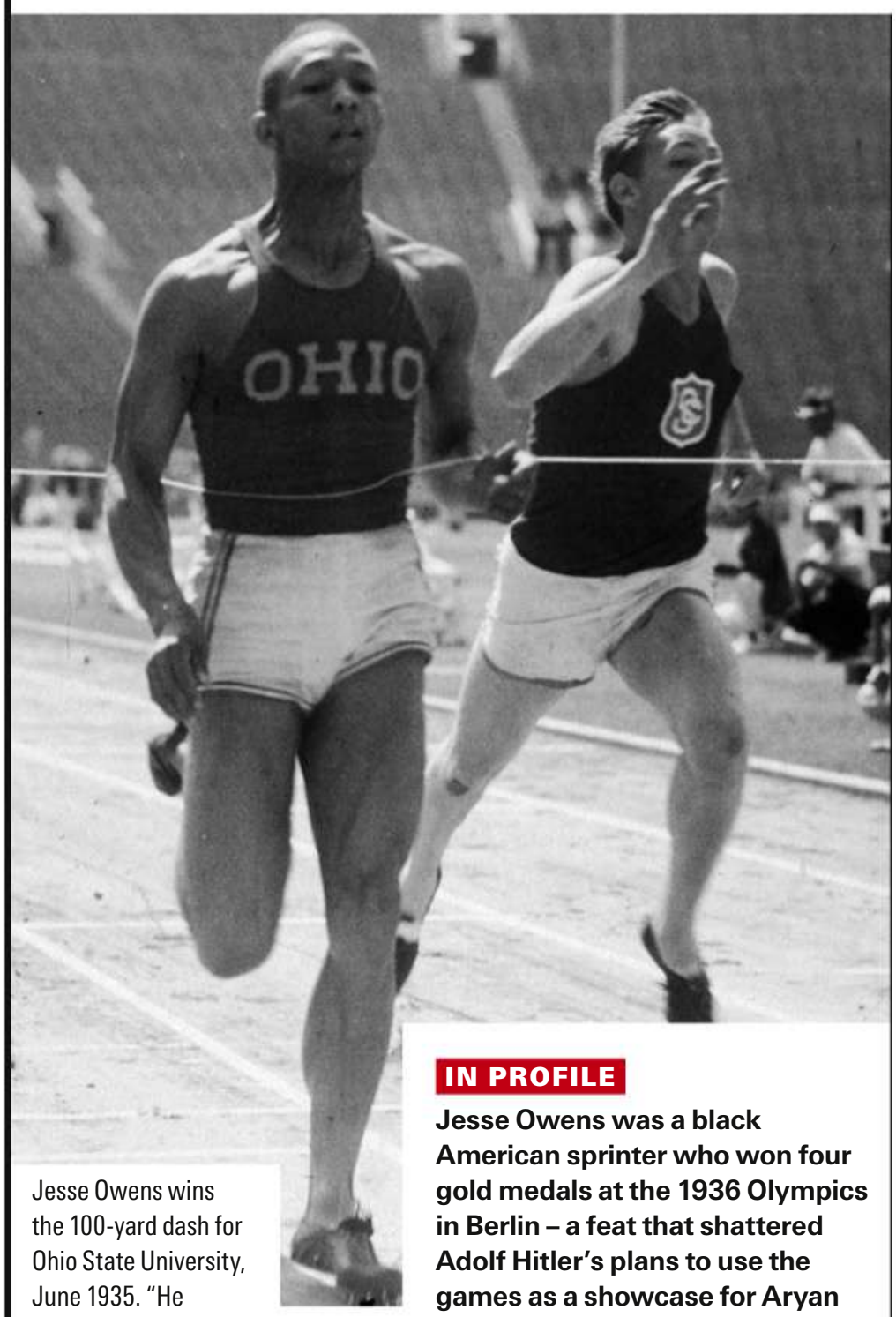
As the Queen celebrates 70 years on the throne, Tracy Borman reveals how past monarchs marked these occasions

MY HISTORY HERO

Actor, author and TV presenter ***Ross Kemp*** *chooses*

Jesse Owens

1913–80



Jesse Owens wins the 100-yard dash for Ohio State University, June 1935. "He absolutely never, ever gave up – whatever the odds," says Ross Kemp

IN PROFILE

Jesse Owens was a black American sprinter who won four gold medals at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin – a feat that shattered Adolf Hitler's plans to use the games as a showcase for Aryan supremacy. President Roosevelt never publicly acknowledged Owens' triumph. However, in 1976 Gerald Ford awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in recognition of what is among the most iconic sporting achievements of the 20th century.

> "He was a bit of a showman, and even raced against horses for money. When asked why, he said: 'You can't eat four gold medals'"

Ross Kemp is best known for playing Grant Mitchell in *EastEnders*. His new series, *Ross Kemp: Shipwreck Treasure Hunter*, airs on Sky History from 18 April

When did you first hear about Owens? It was at school while studying for my history O-level. I remember being fascinated by the story of this incredible black athlete who, by winning four gold medals at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, put a huge dent in Hitler's myth of an Aryan "master race".

What made him a hero? He absolutely never, ever gave up – whatever the odds, whatever prejudices he was confronted with. We're talking here about a legendary athlete who was born with some kind of growth on his chest – his mother removed it herself without anaesthetic when he was a boy. Then, when he went to Ohio State University, he couldn't live on campus or eat with white athletes because he was black. Not even that could stop him in his tracks.

And the prejudice didn't end after his gold medal haul in Berlin. When New York's Waldorf Astoria hosted a celebration marking his incredible performance in the games, he wasn't permitted to enter the hotel through the main doors – and had to take the freight elevator – simply because he was black.

What was Owens' finest hour? I'd say that there were two. The first came on 25 May 1935 when, in just 45 minutes, he broke the world records for the 220-yard dash, the 220-yard low hurdles and the long jump, and equalled the world record for the 100-yard dash. Then, of course, there was his immortal performance in Berlin the following year, when he won four gold medals [100m, 200m, long jump and relay] right under the noses of the Nazis, who thought he was inferior just because of the colour of his skin. These two performances surely mark him out as the greatest athlete of the 20th century.

What kind of person was he? He was resourceful and did what he had to do to survive. He even raced against horses to make a bit of money. When asked why, he said: "You can't eat four gold medals." You see, life wasn't always that easy for him after he retired – he worked in a gas station and as a janitor and was even convicted for tax evasion. Above all, he was human, with all the flaws and contradictions that come with that.

Can you see any parallels between his life and your own? Absolutely none! I'd love to have been as fast as him when I was younger but quickly realised that that wasn't case. I was quite rapid over the first 20 metres, then slowed down very quickly! So I threw myself into rugby rather than athletics.

What would you ask him if you could meet him? I'd ask him if winning the four golds in Berlin made all the prejudice he'd had to endure as a young athlete worthwhile. H

Ross Kemp was talking to Spencer Mizen

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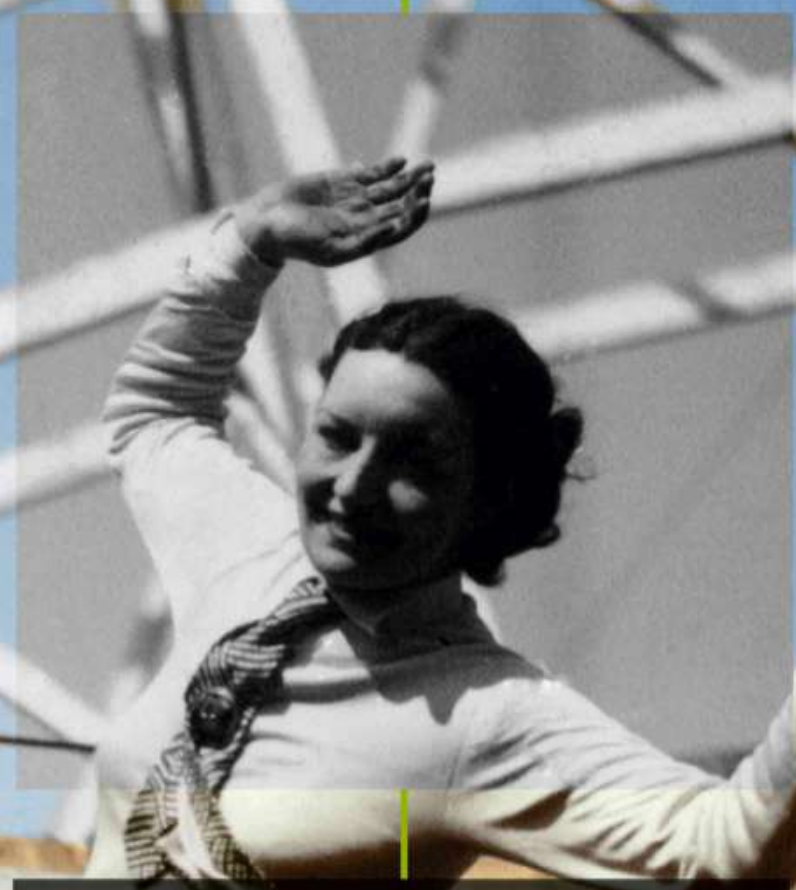

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